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Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

15 DAYS BEFORE Christmas

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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BSI, Kan Pacific strike deal

From left, Joseph Iacopino, special counsel for Kan Pacific Saipan; Yoshihiro Kitami, president of Kan Pacific Saipan; and Mark A Brown, CEO of Best Sunshine International, Ltd. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A deal has been struck between Best Sunshine International, Ltd. and the owners of Mariana Resort and Spa to assign the remaining lease years of the resort's coveted Marpi lands to the Saipan casino operators, according to a Best Sunshine statement yesterday.

See BSI on Page 4

Casino posts $1.63B VIP rolling in Nov.

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Casino Commission confirmed yesterday a report that Saipan's temporary casino, Best Sunshine Live, generated a VIP rolling of nearly $1.63 billion in November.

GGR Asia reported these numbers last week, citing a filing in the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, but added that the document stated that the numbers were not audited.

"My understanding is that is correct," said commission executive director Edward Deleon Guerrero yesterday. The commission monitors the financial earnings of the Saipan casino, Best Sunshine International, Ltd., daily.

See CASINO on Page 4

HOLIDAY RUSH

JON PEREZ

Division of Parks and Recreation personnel work on the steel base that would hold the more than 10-foot Christmas tree at the parking lot of the Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center in Susupe. The tree's lights are scheduled to be turned on in simple rites this Friday.

See story on Page 3

Made in China: Fake Saipan driver's license

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

One of the three suspects in the shipment of $850,000 worth of methamphetamine or "ice" allegedly told investigators how they obtained a fictitious Saipan driver's license in China, which they then used to pick up the contraband on Saipan.

In a statement filed in federal court, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration special agent

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LOCAL

The Catholic faithful celebrates the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

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NATION

The House votes to tighten controls on visa-free travel to the United States.

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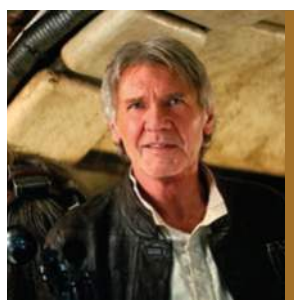

LIFE & STYLE

There are few topics about "Star Wars" that inspire a twinkle in Harrison Ford's eyes.

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Local

Nihon University in Mishima, Japan students create a special fruit juice to raise funds to help students on Saipan.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Nihon University students fundraise for Saipan relief

Nihon University professor Yukiko Koshiro and her students have created a special fruit juice to raise funds last month for students on Saipan, *Saipan Tribune* learned.

Also, the Nihon University campus library has agreed to include David M. Sablan's book, *A Degree of Success Through Curiosity*, to its collection. The book is an intense personal narrative of overcoming the odds while growing up during and after World War II.

"I am anxious to send my students to the library and read it and learn about [David's] life," said Yukiko, who is from the school's Department of Exchange Studies, College of International Relations.

Her students also plan to create a Japanese translation of Sablan's book.

"My students sold special tropical drinks at the campus festival last month and declared to donate all the profits to Saipan. With help from the Marianas Visitors Authority Japan office, the students did quite well, and made good profits. We are going to combine the profits from the previous activities and get ready to send the donation to Saipan. Willie Matsumoto will help us determine how to do this. We hope this is going to be a very modest Christmas gift from Mishima, Japan," she said. ***(Daisy Demapan)***

Best Sunshine CSR team launches 'Village Pride'

When we think of home, we think of its natural beauty—the vibrant flowers, the breathtaking sunsets, and the pristine waters. It is part of our culture to ensure that the beauty of our island continues to thrive through our people's efforts at maintenance and preservation. Conserving this longstanding tradition encourages and strengthens unity and pride in our community.

Best Sunshine's corporate social responsibility team launched their latest venture last week called "Village Pride," an island-wide beautification project.

Encompassing the idea of *inafamaolek* and *tipiyeew*, which means bringing peace and togetherness, CSR will be hosting a barbecue every week welcoming villagers to come and interact with members of the team.

Rita Chong, director of CSR 1 and team leader of the project, said, "We are introducing CSR to the public, village by village. We hope that by meeting the community members, we will be able to have a better grasp on how best we can serve the community as CSR."

"This project is CSR's approach in meeting new people from the different communities to expand our network. We are the department of BSI that goes into the communities and partners with various agencies to improve our island," said Geri Dela Cruz, director of CSR 2. "We encourage our employees to introduce our team at these gatherings to various people in their communities so that we can reach out to them."

"Village Pride" is not just another Best Sunshine project; it is a personal undertaking that contains a more distinctly special and ambitious theme. Residents have extolled the pride we have in preserving the natural beauty of our home and its assemblage of singular villages united as one island, a pride tied to deeper cultural currents that have been in place for generations.

"Eventually, we want to launch within each village a program where we assist the villagers. The villagers can get together to discuss potential projects for their own villages so that every village will be able to display what is unique about them," said Chong.

This week's featured event will take place in the village of Chalan Kanoa District 4 and will be organized by Manny Ogarto, CSR project manager, who is a Laly 4 resident. Ogarto encourages his fellow villagers to join Best Sunshine's CSR team this Friday from 6pm to 10pm for food and fun.

"I think events like Village Pride are essential to the community, especially Laly 4," said Ogarto. "It gives people the opportunity to meet us and personally address their concerns. Through this, we will be able to figure out how we can help the village as well as its people." ***(BSI)***

Workers rush to finish giant Christmas tree by Fri.

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Some 30 personnel from various government agencies are rushing to finish work on the giant Christmas tree at the parking lot of the Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center in Susupe in time for Friday's lighting ceremony.

The Christmas tree is a joint project of the offices of the Governor and Lt. Governor, with the help of the Women's Affairs Office and the Lady Diann Foundation of Diann Tudela Torres, the wife of acting governor Ralph DLG Torres.

Lucy Aldan, who is supervising the project, said they are a bit behind in putting up the Christmas tree since some of the personnel helping them have been busy with the typhoon debris cleanup.

"We have done this every year but we're a bit behind schedule because of the typhoon. With the help of personnel from the Department of Public Works, and Parks and Recreation, and the inmates we would be able to finish on Friday," Aldan told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

Parks and Recreation personnel Ike Santos, Ruben Acebo, Manny Cabrera, and Ike Camacho said they have been doing this project for more than 10 years.

"We're the same group that has been helping put up the Christmas tree every year. Maybe we're good at it," Camacho said with a laugh.

Director Drew, who was also at the Multipurpose Center's parking lot to check the ongoing project, said one reason why it's taking so long is they are making sure the Christmas tree is secure.

"We're trying to make sure the tree will withstand strong winds or a possible typhoon that may pass Saipan. They are welding a steel base around the tree," Drew said. "We don't want somebody get injured or a passing car be damaged from a fallen tree. Safety is our top concern here."

Spotlights were also put up in order for all personnel to work up to 7pm last night.

"Hopefully by [tonight] the garlands, lights, and other ornaments will be in place. Our target is to finish by Friday and there will be a simple ceremony in lighting the Christmas tree," said Drew.

Ex-cop admits violating release conditions

Former police officer Florencio Q. Richards has admitted to allegations that he used methamphetamine or "ice" again and committed other violations while on supervised release.

At a revocation hearing on Tuesday, Richards admitted to violating his conditions of supervised release and stated he had just started a new job at a gas station.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona said that depending on how things progress for Richards, he will be sentenced on Dec. 22, 2015, at 11am.

Attorney Michael Dotts, the court-appointed counsel for Richards, stated that there were two violations his client admitted to, which was the use of "ice."

Citing that Richards had recently started a new job, Dotts requested that a sentencing hearing be set in two weeks, so that the parties may try to work something out.

Assistant U.S. attorney Russell Lorfing said he was happy to hear Richards had found a job. He, however, stated that there needs to be consequences for Richards violating his supervised release conditions and that if he is not going to be forthcoming with the court and the U.S. Probation Office, he should be jailed.

Probation officer Gregory Arriola said the test results confirmed that the drug test sample was diluted.

Arriola alleged in the petition for revocation that Richards had used "ice" on Oct. 11 and 21, 2015, failed to submit for drug testing on Oct. 11, 2915, and failed to follow instructions from the probation officer to report for drug testing on Oct. 23, 2015.

In August 2011, the court sentenced Richards to 24 months in prison for distributing "ice" while he was still an active officer.

On Jan. 30, 2014, Manglona revoked Richards' supervised release and sent him to three months in prison with credit for time served for using "ice" again. After serving his sentence, Richards was placed on 33 months of supervised release.

In December 2014, the court revoked Richards' supervised release and slapped him with a nine-month prison term for violating his probation by repeatedly using "ice." He was then placed on 24 months of supervised release. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Judiciary to host Mock Trial Academy

The Northern Mariana Islands Judiciary will conduct the second annual High School Mock Trial Academy this Saturday, Dec. 12, at the Guma' Hustisia. High school students from Saipan, Tinian, and Rota will attend lectures on various facets of mock trial and the legal system, including the rules of evidence, credible witness portrayal, and effective trial presentation.

The presenters at this year's academy will include U.S. Magistrate Judge Heather L. Kennedy, U.S. Attorney for Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands Alicia A.G. Limtiaco, Assistant U.S. Attorney Garth Backe, and attorneys Rexford Kosack and Robert Tenorio Torres.

The CNMI High School Mock Trial competition, comparable to a state-level competition, challenges students to try a case that models real-world conflict in the courtroom before real judges and a jury made up of attorneys.

"Participating in mock trial helps students develop important life and leadership skills, such as active listening, critical thinking, public speaking, and teamwork," said Sheila Trianni, 2016 High School Mock Trial coordinator. "It also increases comprehension of the basis of our judicial system and teaches them about the law and court system."

"Mock trial builds a bridge between the students' education and the legal profession, that supports the development of our future leaders and lawyers of tomorrow," Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro said. "The Judiciary appreciates the assistance of the presenters, Commissioner Rita A. Sablan, the Public School System and the CNMI Bar Association for continuing to partner with the Judiciary in the Mock Trial Program and the Mock Trial Academy."

The 2016 competition will take place in February at the Guma' Hustisia. The winning team will represent the CNMI at the National High School Mock Trial Championship in Boise, Idaho in May 2016.

For more information regarding this year's Mock Trial problem, *Douglas v. Harrison*, or the High School Mock Trial Program, visit the Judiciary's website at http://www.justice.gov.mp/ or the CNMI Bar online at http://cnmibar.net or email nmimocktrial@gmail.com. ***(NMI Judiciary)***

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Demapan to re-introduce vetoed bill as new legislation

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A bill to get all active government employees under government insurance and thereby lower premiums across the board will be re-introduced as a new legislation, sans a provision that caused it to be vetoed by acting governor Ralph DLG Torres on Monday.

That provision was a Senate amendment to allow retirees to re-enroll in the Group Health and Life Insurance Program. But the Attorney General's Office and the Finance Department have said a funding source to shoulder this burden has not been identified and would actually lead to greater insurance premiums, as retirees are expected to make more insurance claims.

Rep. Angel Demapan (R-Saipan), the author of House bill 19-37, said yesterday he is preparing to re-introduce the bill so they can achieve the original intent of increasing enrollment of active employees to help bring down cost of premiums.

"I had a chance to discuss the acting governor's concerns regarding the Senate amendment to increase the number of re-enrollees as it would run contrary to my original intent of increasing the number of active employee enrollees so that we can hopefully reduce the cost of insurance premiums," said Demapan. "…I anticipate that when the re-introduced legislation reaches the Senate, they too would take into account the concerns raised by acting governor Torres in his veto message."

He said he is confident that both chambers of the Legislature share the same vision and goal of making health insurance and accessibility to health care affordable and reliable.

"This, however, does not mean that we should stop working to provide assistance to our retirees as well. I am in communication with industry stakeholders as to how best we can also assist retirees with regard to access to affordable health insurance. I'm hoping that in due time, through these interactions, we will be able to formulate a viable plan that will provide best practices to assist retirees currently residing in the CNMI and those who have relocated abroad.

"I will continue to work with stakeholders to explore options with regards to supplementing coverage for retirees who are eligible for full Medicare. I will also look into CNMI retiree populations residing in the States participating in insurance exchange programs as provided by the Affordable Care Act and how we can help those retirees tap into that resource to help alleviate the cost of health insurance premiums," said Demapan.

JUDICIARY IN ACTION CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Joint Region Marianas Commander Rear Admiral Bette Bolivar, seated center, poses with Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman, seated left, and U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona, seated right, during yesterday's naturalization ceremony in celebration of CNMI Constitution Day. Also in the photo are Saipan International School 3rd grade teacher Kathy P. Ruszala and her students (second row). In the back row are members of Mt. Carmel School's AP U.S. government and politics class.

BSI

From Page 1

The statement is bereft of any details about a price tag for this deal, and appears to cool the controversy surrounding the Department of Public Lands decision to bid out the resort lands—which Best Sunshine has said it will compete for.

The Best Sunshine statement said the agreement was reached and signed by Mark A. Brown, Best Sunshine CEO, and Yoshihiro Kitami, Kan Pacific Saipan president. The agreement essentially provides that Kan Pacific will assign its remaining lease on the lot to the Saipan casino and will continue to operate the Mariana Resort & Spa "for at least a year," the casino said.

Kan Pacific's 40-year lease ends in April 2018.

"The parties intend to work together to support Best Sunshine's efforts to obtain a new lease on the land," the casino statement adds.

As for the resort's staff, the casino said the parties have agreed to work together for "maximum employment opportunities for current employees."

A call to Mariana Resort general manager Gloria Cavanagh yesterday to confirm the news was not immediately returned as of press time.

The administration of Gov. Eloy S. Inos also held off on any comments. "At this time, the administration declines to comment until we are furnished a copy of the agreement," said press secretary Ivan Blanco yesterday.

The Best Sunshine statement said it is Kan Pacific's intention to establish a new hotel on Saipan. The parties have discussed the possibility of the new hotel being on the same land "or some other suitable location," the casino said.

"As a result of a decision to enter into discussions about our mutual interests and the interests of the CNMI community, Best Sunshine and Kan Pacific have reached an agreement to work together on a plan that would further our mutual interests and the interests of the Commonwealth," the casino statement said.

The announcement comes nearly a month after Kan Pacific held a rally to garner public support for an extension of their lease. That rally drew hundreds and was led by Kan Pacific founder Nauki Kitami, his nephew and now Kan Pacific president Takami, and resort GM Cavanagh.

DPL's announcement to open the competitive bidding for the Marpi land came a week after on Nov. 20.

Rep. Vincent Sablan (Ind-Saipan), author of a House resolution encouraging DPL to negotiate a new lease for Kan Pacific, said the news came as a surprise.

"I never left out the possibility of Kan Pacific selling, considering everything that they have been put through," he said.

Sablan said the decision to seek competitive bids for the property "changed the entire tone of the situation." "I hope that this instance does not affect the investments of the next hotels whose leases are coming up."

Sablan said he has the resort staff in mind and hopes that the casino will stick to its word about providing "maximum employment opportunities" to current employees. "Otherwise, I hope that they will be able to find employment to continue to support their families."

"It was truly an honor to stand side by side with Kan Pacific, its staff and the Kitami family. It's not easy to say goodbye to 37 years of friendship and service to our island. We appreciate them for all they have done for our island through the years and, most importantly, for sticking with us through thick and thin. … We will miss Kan Pacific, and I'm sure it will never be the same for many of us, but we must also respect their decision," he said.

The lands currently out for bid includes lots used for race-car tracks, mini golf courses, and the Marpi hotel itself, its cottages, villas, and maintenance and sports facilities, and other vacant lands held by Kan Pacific Saipan.

The total property amounts to 1.61 million square meters.

Best Sunshine officials have said that they plan to build world's largest waterpark, 20 hotels, and a one-kilometer long shopping strip in the area.

CASINO

From Page 1

Guerrero clarified that the $1.63 billion number is not the same as earnings or profits.

The rolling chip volume, he said, is not the amount of money earned but the amount of activities, as each non-negotiable chip played has a value.

"It's a non-negotiable chip so they can play it over, and over and over," he said. "[Rolling generated] tells you the volume of activities," he said. "It's a good indicator that you have activity."

Guerrero also said they have not started junket operations, but were finalizing forms for these operators, who will "take the lead in bringing in high rollers to ensure the volume anticipated will be realized."

"We have not started junket operations yet. These are just friends of the owners coming out to play," he said.

FAKE

From Page 1

Kirk F. Johns also disclosed how joint federal and local law enforcers investigated the discovery of 4.9 lbs of "ice" last Dec. 2 that led to the arrest of Xi Xuang, Shicheng Cai, and Zhaopeng Chen, all Chinese nationals.

A routine Customs inspection at the Port of Saipan of a 40-foot container from Guangzhou, China, resulted in the discovery of the "ice" hidden in three plastic bags in one of nine 5-gallon paint containers.

Johns said they found out during interviews that Huang and Cai arrived at the same time on Saipan from Shanghai, China, last Dec. 4, while Chen and his wife came to the island last Dec. 2.

According to Johns, Cai recounted that his friend, Huang, took him to get a fictitious Saipan driver's license a couple of days prior to their trip to Saipan.

Cai allegedly disclosed that a woman created the fictitious driver's license. He said he had no input on what information was on the driver's license other than his date of birth and his picture.

Cai stated that he had never been to Saipan prior to this occasion, which investigators confirmed to be true.

Cai said it was Huang who coordinated the delivery of the paint from China. He said Huang was supposed to pay him $7,000 to $8,000 for helping him in the delivery.

He said Huang's female friend picked them up at the Saipan airport and brought them to Summer Hotel where he and Huang stayed in one room.

Earlier that day, Huang drove Cai to a car rental and directed him (Cai) to rent a car. Huang gave Cai $250 for the car rental.

In China, Cai said, Huang instructed him to pick up the paint buckets and bring them to a cargo shipping agency for shipping from Fujian to Guangzhou and finally to Saipan.

He said upon picking up the paints on Saipan, Huang told him to separate one of the buckets that has the best handwriting on it. Cai said the bucket was stinky and the lids were not tight and he observed a white substance in it.

Johns said among the items seized from one of the vehicles involved was the fictitious Saipan driver's license in the name of Cai Feng Xin.

Johns said Huang stated that he had come to Saipan to visit his mother, who lives on Tinian. Huang said Cai is his wife's brother-in-law.

Huang said he did not know where Cai got his fake Saipan driver's license. He also denied knowing where the buckets in Cai's vehicle came from.

Chen stated that he arrived on Saipan last Dec. 2 and that his wife was waiting for him at the Sunshine Garden Hotel. Chen stated they had come to the island to shop for jewelry and for vacation.

Chen said Huang is his cousin's son. He said he was supposed to pick up Huang at the airport in the morning of Dec. 4 but had overslept.

Chen also denied knowing where the paint buckets came from.

DEA agents served arrest warrants on Cai, Huang, and Chen on Monday after the U.S. government filed a complaint charging them in federal court with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute "ice."

WW II vet's grandkid joins OAG's Criminal Division

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

CNMI Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro Castro administers the oath to assistant attorney general Betsy Weintraub at the Supreme Court on Monday. Witnessing the ceremony, from left, are acting chief prosecutor Chester Hinds, and assistant attorneys general Matthew Baisley, Heather Barcinas, and Emily Cohen.

»Prosecutor shares visit to Tinian where her late grandfather was assigned during war

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Betsy Weintraub, the granddaughter of a World War II veteran who was assigned on Tinian, has joined the Office of the Attorney General's Criminal Division.

Weintraub was sworn in on Monday as an assistant attorney general before CNMI Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro Castro.

"I have always wanted to come here," said Weintraub, disclosing that her grandfather, Sam Weintraub, served as head of the U.S. Army Air Corps G-2 security and intelligence for Tinian during World War II.

"I learned about Saipan from him when I was younger," she said.

At the OAG, Weintraub will be working at the criminal appeals unit and will be handling violent crimes, sex crimes, and drug offenses.

She has a bachelor's degree in English Rhetoric and Writing and French from the University of Tennessee. She obtained her juris doctor from the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law.

While in law school, she earned CALI awards for excellence in trial advocacy, immigration law, and criminal procedure II.

Weintraub served as a law clerk to the criminal court judges of Shelby County, Tennessee. She served as an assistant district attorney general for the 30th Judicial District of Tennessee. As a criminal prosecutor, she represented the state in hundreds of bench trials and contested hearings.

In 2011, Weintraub tried 11 jury trials in criminal court and nine of those resulted in guilty verdicts.

After working for the district attorney's office in Memphis as a prosecutor for three years, she went into private practice, joining the Fisher & Phillips LLP law firm office in Memphis.

Weintraub's father, Jeff, is a lawyer and the regional managing partner for Fisher & Phillips LLP. Her brother is also a lawyer in Oakland, CA.

Acting chief prosecutor Chester Hinds said they're looking forward to having Weintraub at the OAG's Criminal Division.

"Since she's been here, so far she already made a good impact on our office. She's working on several projects already," Hinds said, adding that Weintraub's expertise is going to of great use here in the CNMI.

Weintraub has only been on Saipan for two weeks but already finds the island beautiful and the people warm. She said her late grandfather, Sam, was also a lawyer and enlisted in the U.S. Army right after he got married.

She said her grandfather ended up on Tinian, where he became a major and pioneered psychological warfare.

Weintraub said her grandfather absolutely loved Tinian and Saipan so he came back on the islands in the 1980s. She said her grandfather's stories of the war were pretty amazing, prompting her to come here.

Weintraub visited Tinian for the first time last Tuesday. Local historian Don Farrell took her around the island. She said they went to some places on Tinian where her grandfather had been.

"It was so amazing. It was really like, I can't wait to get back to Tinian," she said.

Weintraub said Tinian was a part of her grandfather and that he felt like he was part of the island.

"I just like being out there, standing where he stood. Like I totally just felt what he felt for that place. It's just amazing," she said.

Kagman school on full-day schedule

Kagman Elementary School will be on a full-day schedule beginning Monday, Dec. 14, 2015. Students are expected to be at school for instruction from 7:30am to 3pm on a daily basis. The extended instructional time is required to make up for lost time as a result of Typhoon Soudelor and will run until March 2016.

"Your continuous support and partnership in the education of our children is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your patience and understanding," said school principal Ignacia T. Demapan. ***(PR)***

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Calls for peace, unity during Feast of Immaculate Conception

Hundreds of Mt. Carmel Students and island parishioners lift their candles while singing *Abe Nanan Yu'us* during Tuesday's Feast of the Immaculate Conception. THOMAS A. MANGLONA II

By THOMAS MANGLONA II
CORRESPONDENT

A unified community is the greatest gift we can give Blessed Mother Mary, according to Fr. Ryan Jimenez, Apostolic Administrator for the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa. Jimenez called for peace and unity amongst parishioners in his homily during the Feast of the Immaculate Conception at Mt. Carmel Cathedral Tuesday.

Jimenez spoke of turmoil in the community, between families and individuals, urging listeners to "gather together as one under the guidance and protection of our Blessed Mother."

"This identity that we have as children of our Blessed Mother should also be expressed beyond this afternoon. This idea of being one and children of God should be lived out day to day. …We must be unified day in and day out," he urged.

Jimenez challenged members of the Church to live their true Catholic identity in the most ordinary things as well.

"We need to reclaim this description of who we are…as Catholics—to see how we truly love one another. We need to seek what unites and overcome what divides," he said.

After Mass and the crowning of the Blessed Mother by MCS senior Cathryn Javier, those in attendance participated in the traditional *lukao* or procession of the Blessed Mother, led by altar servers, several Church ministries, and the students of Mount Carmel School while praying the Holy Rosary.

The celebration also featured a candle tribute to Blessed Mother Mary, where people lifted their candles and sang *Abe Nanan Yu'us*, exclaiming *"Biba"* as darkness set on Church grounds.

"The celebration is the same every year, but the feeling is different. Having MCS take part in it is something I can't explain… It is a wonderful and moving experience,' said school principal Frances Taimanao.

MCS, which has participated in this annual feast since the '60s, was present that night to once again share their voices and lead the diocesan community in song, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, and procession.

"This is a great day for everyone. All the youth come and celebrate in a tribute to the Mother of Mothers alongside adults," MCS theology teacher and campus minister Vir Abueme said.

For 8th grader William Blake Deleon Guerrero, the experience is unique and inspiring. "I feel like I am housed by God when I come here. I don't feel alone. I get to spend time with friends here and celebrate the [Blessed Mother] Mary."

The annual three-hour liturgical celebration is the patronal feast day for Spain, Korea, Portugal, Brazil, the Philippines, and the United States—nine months before the feast of the Nativity of Mary. The celebration is often referred to as the "dogma of the Catholic Church."

Mt. Carmel School senior Cathryn Javier crowns the Blessed Mother during the liturgical celebration Tuesday at Mt. Carmel Cathedral. THOMAS A. MANGLONA II

Senior students of Mount Carmel School pull the statue of the Blessed Mother onto Church grounds at the end of the *lukao*. THOMAS A. MANGLONA II

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Supreme Court affirms disbarment order vs lawyer

On Dec. 9, 2015, the Supreme Court affirmed the trial court's order disbarring Stephen C. Woodruff from the practice of law by a 2–1 vote, in *In re Woodruff*, 2015 MP 11. On appeal, Woodruff argued the trial court erred by: (1) applying the Rules of Civil Procedure to determine the deadline for a response to an amended complaint in a disciplinary proceeding, and (2) refusing to set aside the default.

Nine complaints were submitted regarding Woodruff's conduct as an attorney between 2008 and 2012, alleging Woodruff's failure to communicate with clients and complete work for which he was paid. Based on these claims, disciplinary counsel filed a request with the Supreme Court for Woodruff's interim suspension from practicing law pending resolution of a disciplinary proceeding. The high court granted the interim suspension, and disciplinary counsel subsequently filed a complaint against Woodruff in the trial court. Two weeks later, disciplinary counsel filed and served upon Woodruff an amended complaint, indicating the deadline for a response. When Woodruff failed to respond by the due date, disciplinary counsel filed for an entry of default, which the trial court granted. Woodruff then requested that the trial court set aside entry of default, asserting he was unclear about when his response was due. The trial court denied the request, held a hearing on the default judgment, and disbarred him from the practice of law.

In the majority opinion, the Supreme Court held the trial court did not err by applying the Rules of Civil Procedure to determine Woodruff's response deadline. Although the NMI Rules of Attorney Discipline and Procedure do not expressly incorporate the Rules of Civil Procedure with regard to amended pleadings, the trial court appropriately referred to the Rules of Civil Procedure in light of gaps in the disciplinary rules.

As to whether the trial court erred by refusing to set aside the default, the high court noted Woodruff admitted his failure to respond was due to his own inattention. In paragraph 24 of the opinion, the high court commented: "[T]he basis for the disciplinary action involved multiple complaints that Woodruff failed to diligently pursue legal matters, including repeated allegations of his failure to adequately communicate with clients and to timely complete work. If he were a layperson, his conduct in this case might not rise to the level of an act that is willful, deliberate, or in bad faith that would qualify as intentional. But because Woodruff is an attorney, who should appreciate the legal consequence of default, we conclude his failure to respond was due to his culpable conduct."

The minority agreed that the trial court did not err by entering default and refusing to set aside the entry of default. However, because disbarment is a severe consequence, the minority would have exercised the high court's inherent authority to regulate attorney conduct in reversing and remanding for a disciplinary hearing.

Ultimately, the majority affirmed the trial court's entry of default and default judgment order disbarring Woodruff from the practice of law.

The high court's full opinion is available at http://www.cnmilaw.org/supreme15.html. ***(NMI Judiciary)***

Super unleaded gasoline is now available at Mobil gas stations

Mobil Oil Marianas announced yesterday the availability of super unleaded (Octane 91) gasoline at 10 of 11 service stations on Saipan starting on Dec. 4, 2015.

Since Typhoon Soudelor swept through Saipan in August, the Saipan Mobil Terminal had been able to only supply regular unleaded (Octane 87) gasoline to motorists. With the support of local contractors and regional expertise, the Mobil team on Saipan worked hard to complete its repairs and Super Unleaded (Octane 91) gasoline is now available at Mobil service stations.

Earlier, on Oct 23, 2015, Mobil had announced the return of the service station network to full operation with the opening of Chalan Piao service station. Ten of Mobil's service stations sustained minor damage when Typhoon Soudelor hit the island in early August. They were quickly repaired and were open to first responders and essential services within a day after the typhoon.

With services restored at Chalan Piao station and the availability of Super Unleaded (Octane 91), Mobil's network of service stations on Saipan will bring to our customers pre-typhoon levels of service. ***(Mobil)***

Sponsorship packages for Chamorro show

By DAISY DEMAPAN
daisy_demapan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Ketungo' Chamorro, a Webisode project for the promotion, practice and preservation of the Chamorro language, is offering sponsorship packages for companies or local agencies interested in being a part of the undertaking.

According to producer and director Valentina Rivera, the project began two years ago while she was working for a different production company. At the time, she was tasked with producing ideas for television. Rivera realized the potential for Chamorro language show and called on the Public School System, which helped fund and produce a series called Fino' Chamorro.

"It was all different language lessons," she says, but it did not represent the diversity of the Chamorro culture.

Two years later, Rivera decided to start her own production company called Rivers Pictures and began planning to incorporate aspects of language, history and interactive lessons for dissemination over the Internet instead of conforming to a narrow television audience.

"It's like going on a field trip," she said of her desire for a program that represents the islands as accurately as possible. "Initial plans are for 20 episodes a season, starting with a beginner level introduction to the culture, then intermediate and advanced," she said.

Rivera has been working on this project since Typhoon Soudelor and welcomes interested sponsors to move forward with the season.

"I'm hoping to start shooting in January and have a website available soon. I wanted this to be online specifically to be more accessible to people around the world, no matter where they are," referring to the many people who have left the islands but remain nostalgic about island life.

Rivera emphasizes the need to think globally.

"I'm hoping companies support this. We would like to do other languages eventually. Not just Chamorro, but also Carolinian and possibly Mandarin. These are all languages that people have an interest in learning about," she says.

Rivera is continuing to speak with local agencies and businesses this week to confirm sponsorships. "We want the community to be more involved in this endeavor," and invites the community to take part and contribute, she adds.

Corporate sponsorships and advertisement sponsorships are available with a pilot episode sponsored by the Northern Marianas Humanities Council for viewing online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cgJnvnLn2U&feature=youtu.be. For more information, call 285-6278 or email riverspictures07@gmail.com.

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Marianas Ink is revitalizing the art of tattooing

By DAISY DEMAPAN
daisy_demapan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The idea to set up a tattoo shop all began when Eugene Wong returned to the islands for a fresh start.

"When I moved back and began working at Toyota, I met Marcus Taisacan and we starting talking about tattoos and we both realized our passion for tattoos," and that's when it clicked, he said.

Wong, who used to operate the Ace Pool Bar, decided to transform his old pool hall into a tattoo parlor.

"I had the old pool hall which was not being used and didn't know what to do with it. I didn't want to get into the bar business again…and I asked Marcus if he wanted to open a shop and the idea hung onto him and he thought about it for awhile and eventually I took out a loan," and that's when the two decided to transform their passion for the art of tattoo into a reality, he said.

The CNMI's only tattoo shop opened in April this year on the second floor of its Garapan location at the former Ace Pool bar.

Citing the misconception that tattoos can be done by anyone or that it's easy, "some think that all tattoos are prison style or backyard tattooing but we're all health-certified and skilled," he said.

"There was only one shop for a long time that laid down the culture of tattoo, but now we have a new generation and we're doing our best to change the perception of tattooing. All our artists are born and raised here, have a lot of history here and this is a skilled craft, backed by many years of passion, practice and refining," Wong said.

Megavision used to be the primary shop for enthusiasts to get inked professionally but it closed shop and moved to Guam in July.

Being the only locally owned tattoo shop on the island, Wong said they will regularly feature guest artists from Guam. For the holidays, the shop will also be offering Christmas specials on regional seals for those looking to represent their islands such as the Philippines, Guam, Yap, the Marshall Islands, Pohnpei, the CNMI, Kosrae, Palau, and Chuuk starting at $200.

Those who want to get inked must be 18 and sign a waiver committing to tattoo aftercare.

For Polynesian, custom fonts, custom designs or cover-ups, contact Chris Sablan at 783-0809 or Marcus Taisacan at 989-9393.

For services that include Oriental art and color fill-ins, contact Rods Hernandez at 788-2584 or follow the artists on Facebook and Instagram. The shop is open from 12pm to 8pm, Monday to Saturday with Sundays by appointment only. It is located on Beach Road, the second floor above Canton Restaurant.

Free training on trauma-informed advocacy

The Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence will be hosting a two-day training called "Trauma-Informed Advocacy: Recognizing the Signs & Symptoms of Trauma in Domestic Violence Victims" on Dec. 14 and 15, 2015, at the Pacific Islands Club that is open to those whose work involve helping victims of domestic violence.

The aim of this advocacy training, which will be from 7:30am to 5:00pm on both days at PIC's Napu Room, is to provide further education on domestic violence, how to support and help victims, and to serve as a refresher and capacity development opportunity. This training is open to service providers, advocates, as well as interested members of the community.

The training will also provide an in-depth study of trauma, explore the role it plays in domestic violence cases and provide knowledge and resources to enhance trauma-informed services when working with victims of crime, most especially those who have suffered domestic abuse.

Featured topics include the domestic violence movement, the basics of domestic violence and advocacy, laws on domestic and sexual violence, lethality of domestic violence and safety planning, trauma and trauma-informed services, and a faith-based perspective.

While there is no fee to register, seating is limited to the first 75 individuals who register. Those who wish to register and/or seeking additional information may contact Angelyn Nimwes, NMCADSV program manager, at (670) 234-3878 or email angelyn@endviolencenmi.org.

The host of this training, the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence, is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded in 2007 with the mission to "promote, nourish and sustain a collective movement to end violence in the CNMI."

For information or inquiries about NMCADSV, contact the NMCADSV office at (670) 234-3878 or email info@endviolencenmi.org. For additional information and updates, follow NMCADSV on Facebook, Twitter @EndViolenceNMI, and Instagram @nmcadsv. ***(NMCADSV)***

NMC info session on Monday

Northern Marianas College has scheduled its information session for the upcoming spring 2016 semester on Monday, Dec. 14, 2015, at the NMC As Terlaje Campus, Building D at 6pm for all prospective students and community members.

Representatives from the college's counseling, financial aid, and admissions offices will be on hand to provide helpful information and answer questions. College representatives will also discuss financial aid opportunities and other initiatives.

The deadline for submitting admission applications for the spring 2016 semester is on Jan. 4, 2016. The first day of classes is scheduled for Jan. 19, 2016. Other relevant spring 2016 dates have been posted on www.marianas.edu.

NMC offers several degree programs, including a bachelor of science degree in education (concentration areas: elementary education, early childhood education, special education, or rehabilitation and human services), bachelor of science degree in business management (new); associate degrees business administration (emphasis on accounting, business management, or computer applications), liberal arts, nursing, natural resources management, criminal justice, and hospitality management.

For more information about the information session and/or applying to NMC, contact (670) 234-5484, email oar@marianas.edu or visit www.marianas.edu. ***(NMC)***

Guam to receive $2.1M for typhoon cleanup

The U.S. Department of Labor has awarded $2,174,453 National Dislocated Worker Grant incremental grant to the Guam Agency for Human Resources Development.

On June 30, 2015, the department approved a National Dislocated Worker Grant for up to $2,772,641, with $592,253 released initially. This incremental grant brings the total funds awarded for this project to $2,766,706.

The Guam Agency for Human Resources Development will use the funds to continue temporary employment of about 215 workers to assist with the cleanup and recovery efforts needed after Typhoon Dolphin struck Guam from May 13-15, 2015.

On June 5, 2015, the Federal Emergency Management Agency issued Major Disaster Declaration DR-4224 in response to the destruction left in the aftermath of the typhoon. ***(USDOL)***

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PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP16-OPA-025

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 07, 2016 **TIME: 10:00 AM**

"FINANCIAL AUDIT FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS RETIREMENT FUND (NMIRF) AND GROUP HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE TRUST FUND (GHLITF), AS COMPONENT UNITS OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2015"

THE AUDIT GUIDELINES AND SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE PUBLIC AUDITOR'S MAIN OFFICE AT 1236 YAP DRIVE, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN DURING NORMAL WORKING HOURS FROM 8:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M., MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, EXCEPT HOLIDAYS.

INQUIRIES MAY BE DIRECTED TO MR. DAVID BLAKE, AUDIT MANAGER, AT TELEPHONE NUMBERS (670) 322-6481/2 OR BY FACSIMILE TO (670) 322-7812.

THE GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND PROPOSALS, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

/S/ MICHAEL PAI, CPA
PUBLICA AUDITOR

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP16-BECQ-024

SUBMISSION: JANUARY 13, 2016 **TIME: 10:00 A.M.**

"UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK DATABASE DEVELOPMENT, A PROJECT UNDER THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY"

THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THIS PROJECT WILL BE AVAILABLE ON OR AFTER **DECEMBER 10, 2015** AT THE BECQ OFFICE LOCATED AT THE GUALO RAI CENTER BUILDING, ON CHALAN PALE ARNOLD ROAD, SAIPAN OR ELECTRONICALLY BY E-MAIL REQUEST TO **derekchambers@becq.gov.mp** DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR **DECEMBER 29, 2015 AT 10:00 A.M., LOCAL TIME,** IN THE 2ND FLOOR BECQ CONFERENCE ROOM.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP MAY BE SUBMITTED TO FACSIMILE TO MR. DEREK CHAMBERS AT (670) 664-8500 OR BY EMAIL AT **derekchambers@becq.gov.mp** NO LATER THAN THE **CLOSE OF BUSINESS, JANAURY 04, 2016.** RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PROSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN A PROPOSAL IF IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ FRANK M. RABAULIMAN
ADMINISTRATOR OF BECQ

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP16-BEQ-028

SUBMISSION: JANUARY 13, 2016 **TIME: 10:00 A.M.**

"TO DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER WATER QUALITY PROGRAMS, A PROJECT UNDER THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY"

THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THIS PROJECT WILL BE AVAILABLE ON OR AFTER **DECEMBER 10, 2015** AT THE BECQ OFFICE LOCATED AT THE GUALO RAI CENTER BUILDING, ON CHALAN PALE ARNOLD ROAD, SAIPAN OR ELECTRONICALLY BY EMAIL REQUEST TO **ryanokano@becq.gov.mp** DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A **PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING** IS SCHEDULED FOR **DECEMBER 29, 2015 AT 1:00 P.M. LOCAL TIME.** IN THE 2ND FLOOR BECQ CONFERENCE ROOM.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP MAY BE SUBMITTED BY FACSIMILE TO MR. RYAN OKANO AT (670) 664-8540 OR BY EMAIL AT **ryanokano@becq.gov.mp** NO LATER THAN THE **CLOSE OF BUSINESS, JANUARY 04, 2016.** RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WILL ALL PROSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

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/S/ FRANK M. RABAULIMAN
ADMINISTRATOR OF BECQ

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

CDA to celebrate their 30th anniversary next year

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Development Authority will be celebrating its 30th anniversary in March and plans are being mapped out this early on how the agency will mark this milestone.

During their last two board meetings, CDA has been discussing plans on how they will celebrate the occasion as well as educate the public on their various programs.

In last Friday's meeting, loan manager Oscar Camacho shared with board members that they will do day events on Tinian and Rota, while a three-day celebration will be held on Saipan.

Camacho said they are thinking of featuring their clients under the microloan program, State Small Business Credit Initiative, as well as feature a model borrower from CDA.

An auction of CDA's foreclosed assets and properties is also being looked at.

He added that they have been in talks with the Saipan Chamber of Commerce regarding a profit mastery program.

During their meeting last month, board chair Diego Songao noted that the profit mastery program is a good idea to gain the interest of the public.

"We have to make our CDA anniversary more interesting, and incorporating that activity into it would be more interesting," Songao said.

Director Ignacio L. Perez noted that a budget of $20,000 was already approved for their anniversary project.

CDA was established through Public Law 4-49 signed by Gov. Pedro Tenorio on May 31, 1985. Its functions are carried out by two divisions: the Development Banking Division and the Development Corporation Division.

MINA's '12 Days of Giveaways' starts today!

With the holiday season in full force, the Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance is giving the island community a chance to win exciting prizes through their Plastic Bag Challenge *12 Days of Giveaways*.

From now through Dec. 22, 2015, a person who uses any type of reusable or eco-friendly bag at any grocery store and snaps a photo of themselves using it at the checkout counter can enter MINA's Plastic Bag Challenge *12 Days of Giveaways* for a chance to win prizes. They must post their photo on MINA's Facebook page with a caption #iChooseToReuse to enter.

According to program manager Becky Furey, "MINA wants to reward those that refuse plastic bags at the checkout counter. We encourage everyone to be more environmentally conscious during this holiday shopping season."

Snap, Post, & Win. Visit minapacific.org or MINA's Facebook for more details.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

To learn more about MINA's Plastic Bag Challenge *12 Days of Giveaways* visit MINA's Facebook page, email MINA at minaoutreach@gmail.com, or call MINA at 233-7333(REEF). ***(MINA)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Kagman schools update

The release of progress reports for Kagman High School is scheduled on Thursday, Dec. 10, from 4pm to 6pm at the cafeteria.

There will be a PTSA meeting for all Kagman schools at Kagman Elementary School from 5pm to 6pm on Thursday, Dec. 17, 2015. ***(PR)***

Sobriety checkpoints on Fridays

The Department of Public Safety's Traffic Section will be conducting sobriety checkpoint this Friday and next, Dec. 11 and 18, 2015.

On Dec. 11, the first setup will be on Chalan Monsignor Martinez in As Lito, in front of JTV Building on the eastbound lane, from 8pm to 9:15pm.

The second setup will be on Chalan Pale Arnold in Gualo Rai in front of Spring Plaza, on the southbound lane, from 10:30pm to 11:45pm.

On Dec. 18, the first setup will be on Chalan Monsignor Guerrero in Chalan Kiya, in front of the CUC Waterloo, on the westbound lane, from 8pm to 9:15pm

The second will be on Beach Road in Susupe, by the Ada Gymnasium, on the northbound lane, from 10pm to 11:45pm.

In addition, police will be conducting laser speed enforcement along various highways. ***(DPS)***

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4. The minimum deposit to open an account and obtain an umbrella is $100 for Priority Banking Levels 1 and 2, and $1000 for Level 3. You will receive the umbrella as a gift when you mention this offer at any First Hawaiian Bank branch and open or convert to a new personal Priority Banking Checking account. Limit: One umbrella per customer or account. We reserve the right to substitute an item of similar value. Offer expires 12/31/15, or when supplies are exhausted. Please see a Priority Banking Checking account agreement for specific terms and conditions. Benefits may be lost if the account is closed or converted to another type of account. These offers and benefits cannot be combined with any other discounts, offers or promotions.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Response to terrorism must balance liberty and security

It now appears, as some had predicted from the start, that the husband and wife who carried out the brutal massacre in San Bernardino were motivated at least in part by Islamic extremism. According to the FBI, Tashfeen Malik—who, with her husband, Syed Rizwan Farook, killed 14 people and injured 21 more at an office holiday party on Wednesday—had pledged her allegiance to Islamic State on Facebook. There's no indication so far that she or her husband were directed to launch the attack by the group. But given the pledge—and the assault weapons, pipe bombs and other explosives the couple was stockpiling, as well as the contacts discovered between Farook and terrorist groups—the evidence strongly supports the assumption that the two were self-radicalized independent operators inspired to action by rhetoric, terror and violence abroad.

If so, the war has come home. Not for the first time, of course. Before this, there were September 11 and Fort Hood, the Tsarnaev brothers in Boston and plenty of other attempts to bring the battles of the Middle East and the Islamic world across the Atlantic. But the fight against Islamic State—a group with a particularly warped interpretation of Islam that, in addition to capturing territory in Syria and Iraq, took credit for last month's attacks in Paris—may now have appeared at our doorstep. Can anyone imagine that this will be the last such attack in the name of that group? That there won't be copycat killers or other self-appointed Islamic militants seeking glory? Law enforcement officials have long warned that Islamic State embraces what New York Police Commissioner William Bratton called a "diffuse, lone wolf model, which encourages unaffiliated independent operators to do whatever damage they can with whatever is at hand."

That's frightening, of course. But how should the United States respond? There will be all sorts of calls to action. Some have already said the U.S. should not let any Syrian refugees into the country (even though neither Farook nor Malik were refugees or Syrian). Some will demand greater domestic surveillance and more policing of mosques. Some may urge sterner action against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq—no-fly-zones, more airstrikes and additional U.S. boots on the ground. Pressure may rise to curtail domestic liberties in the name of security. With a presidential race heating up, grandstanding candidates will weigh in with all sorts of notions.

It is entirely reasonable at a time like this to reconsider the policies that make us safe and secure at home. But it is also essential to proceed carefully and rationally and not to succumb to the hysteria that sometimes accompanies national emergencies. A nation that detained many of its Japanese citizens after Pearl Harbor, and numerous Muslim citizens after the World Trade Center attacks on 9/11, should remember the shame it felt in the aftermath of those misguided, bigoted actions. A nation that only this year felt compelled to end the bulk collection of Americans' phone records after the program was revealed by Edward Snowden should be careful not to reverse course recklessly in a futile attempt to know everything, everywhere. A nation that went to war in Iraq in part based on an assertion that the regime there had cooperated with al-Qaida should be a bit chastened as it considers its global strategy. In short, we should forge our response through prudence and the wisdom gained from experience, not fear.

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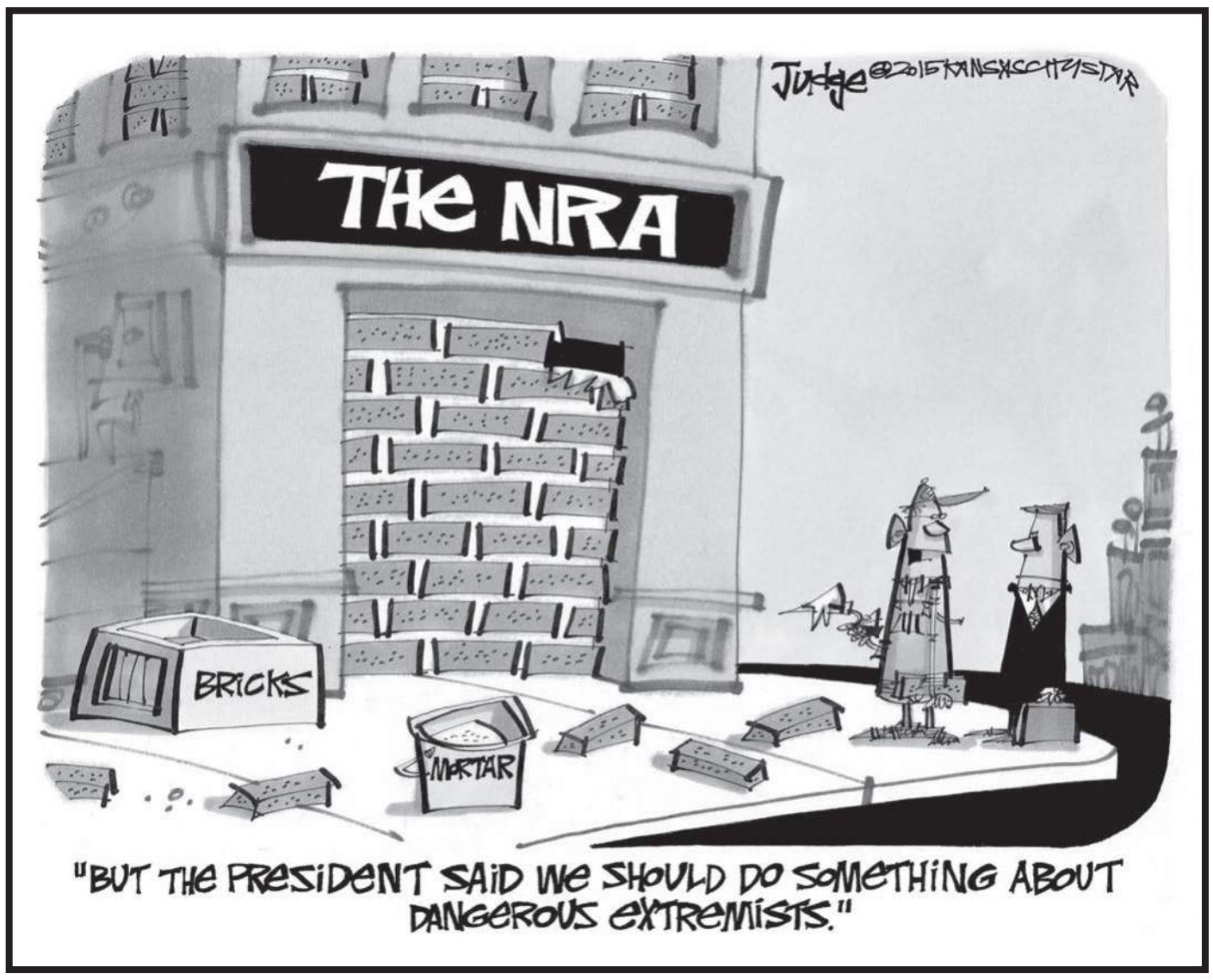
See EDITORIAL on Next Page



Will your driverless car kill you so others may live?

By ERIC SCHWITZGEBEL
Los Angeles Times

Eric Schwitzgebel is a professor of philosophy at UC Riverside and the author of Perplexities of Consciousness. *He blogs at the* Splintered Mind. *He wrote this for the* Los Angeles Times.

It's 2025. You and your daughter are riding in a driverless car along Pacific Coast Highway. The autonomous vehicle rounds a corner and detects a crosswalk full of children. It brakes, but your lane is unexpectedly full of sand from a recent rock slide. It can't get traction. Your car does some calculations: If it continues braking, there's a 90 percent chance that it will kill at least three children. Should it save them by steering you and your daughter off the cliff?

This isn't an idle thought experiment. Driverless cars will be programmed to avoid collisions with pedestrians and other vehicles. They will also be programmed to protect the safety of their passengers. What happens in an emergency when these two aims come into conflict?

The California Department of Motor Vehicles is now trying to draw up safety regulations for autonomous vehicles. These regulations might or might not specify when it is acceptable for collision-avoidance programs to expose passengers to risk to avoid harming others—for example, by crossing the double-yellow line or attempting an uncertain maneuver on ice.

Google, which operates most of the driverless cars being street-tested in California, prefers that the DMV not insist on specific functional safety standards. Instead, Google proposes that manufacturers "self-certify" the safety of their vehicles, with substantial freedom to develop collision-avoidance algorithms as they see fit.

That's far too much responsibility for private companies. Because determining how a car will steer in a risky situation is a moral decision, programming the collision-avoiding software of an autonomous vehicle is an act of applied ethics. We should bring the programming choices into the open, for passengers and the public to see and assess.

Regulatory agencies will need to set some boundaries. For example, some rules should presumably be excluded as too selfish. Consider the over-simple rule of protecting the car's occupants at all costs. This would imply that if the car calculates that the only way to avoid killing a pedestrian would involve sideswiping a parked truck, with a 5 percent chance of injury to the car's passengers, then the car should instead kill the pedestrian.

Other possible rules might be too sacrificial of the passengers. The equally over-simple rule of maximizing lives saved without any special regard for the car's occupants would unfairly disregard personal accountability. What if other drivers—human drivers—have knowingly put themselves in danger? Should your autonomous vehicle risk your safety, perhaps even your life, because a reckless motorcyclist chose to speed around a sharp curve?

A Mountain View lab must not be allowed to resolve these difficult questions on our behalf.

That said, a good regulatory framework ought to allow some manufacturer variation and consumer choice, within ethical limits. Manufacturers or fleet operators could offer passengers a range of options. "When your child is in the car, our onboard systems will detect it and prioritize the protection of rear-seat passengers!" Cars might have aggressive modes (maximum allowable speed and aggressiveness), safety modes, ethical utilitarian modes (perhaps visibly advertised so that others can admire your benevolence) and so forth.

Some consumer freedom seems ethically desirable. To require that all vehicles at all times employ the same set of collision-avoidance procedures would needlessly deprive people of the opportunity to choose algorithms that reflect their values. Some people might wish to prioritize the safety of their children over themselves. Others might want to prioritize all passengers equally. Some people might wish to choose algorithms more self-sacrificial on behalf of strangers than the government could legitimately require of its citizens.

There will also always be trade-offs between speed and safety, and different passengers might legitimately weigh them differently, as we now do in our manual driving choices.

Furthermore, although we might expect computers to have faster reaction times than people, our best computer programs still lag far behind normal human vision at detecting objects in novel, cluttered environments. Suppose your car happens upon a woman pushing a rack of coats in a windy swirl of leaves. Vehicle owners may insist on some sort of preemptive override, some way of telling their car not to employ its usual algorithm, lest it sacrifice them for a mirage.

There is something romantic about the hand upon the wheel—about the responsibility it implies. But future generations might be amazed that we allowed music-blasting 16-year-olds to pilot vehicles unsupervised at 65 mph, with a flick of the steering wheel the difference between life and death. A well-designed machine will probably do better in the long run.

That machine will never drive drunk, never look away from the road to change the radio station or yell at the kids in the back seat. It will, however, have power over life and death. We need to decide—publicly—how it will exert that power.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Asun Hinimidde

By JOHN DELROSARIO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.*

Bes inkuando sumuguyu` man-bisita gi tiahu gi fina` lanchu. Dispues sige hu dibina haf` na mampos-yu` satton nu ayu na lugat. Era i asun kusinaña gi fina` lanchu kumombibida-yu` tatte. I asu muna` ma`a`aggem sentimentog-hu katkuet finatog-hu.

Sumen mauleg na amko` fuminu` Chamorro ya todu inapagatña tomtom yan motmut pinasensia. Ginen dopbladan fino`ña siha `nai ume`eyag-yu` mas to`a na finu` Chamorro.

Deste usun kanastran mama` yan kombetsasion bisita guaha tinateña. Dispues de ha afgue-gue` i bisita nina` batbaru sumañgan haf` sessu finatoña. Matutuhon i fotmat na kombetsasion.

Satton na biha gi gima` Yuus yan che`chu` linahyan tat kumu lisayon matai pat nobenan patron i señgsoñg yan familia. Hu atrebi fumaisen haf` sustansian relihioña.

"Estague` ihu `nai gaige añklan linala`ta. Sin este siempre u lailai botimu esta hiyoñg rubentasion `nai un` mapua yan dimalas". Gai sustansia yan tadoñg este na fino`ña.

Para i atbansau na idatña (86) trabiha kabales manhassu yan makalamya. Hu faisen haf` na brabugue`. Ilegña, "Todu para un` chogue kahulu` ya hagu un` petsige. Cha`mu fan añgoñgog-hu". Diariu chumochu regulatmiente. Hana` fañochu i pinegsai siha ya manrega gi halom hatdin.

Kontentu i amko` ya sentai molestia pot television pat ipad, telefon `sino haf`gue` na trastes modetnu na kombiñiente. Guiya fumagagase magaguña, ta hala` yan inkola dispues `nai ha prensa. Mamomo`lu dididi kinisechan hatdin para ayu na patgoña i mas chatsaga ni sessu binisita. Magahet, satton yan mauleg na sensian saina.

Mattu ham gi kuttura yan tradision. Ilegña na todu ha chogue pot satbasioña deste mananom, mamogsai yan otru siha. "Ti siña hu birayu` tatte sa` tatnai hu diñgu i riku na tinateg-hu". Estague` i mas sustansiau na fino`ña na esta pa`gu sige ha` di hu dibina. Ha kone`yu` tatte bumisitan ñaihon si Iku para bai`n kombetsasion.

Kasi pot manmahayu ham gi feggun guafe na mafattu-`yu` manbisita gi amko`. Estague` na foggun `nai man-na`lagu ham amotsan oga`an antes de bai`n tilus ham para i gima` Yuus para bai`n fan mañetbe kumu tanores. Mauleg na tiempu `nai in`chegue este antes. Poresu na mafattu-yu` manbisita kulan ume`emahalañg yan marinueban sensian hinimide.

Gi ha`anen gupot siha

Gi katkuet birada, guaha manginacha` triste na biahe. Guaha lokue` manlibre. Este na finapos ni unu soplu. Todu u fan ginacha` pot rason na todu sinisede gai tiempu. Guaha oran chaleg, kati, chomochu, yan otru siha.

Ni unabes `nai hu kuestiona este na sinisede sa` i pañgpañg napun linala` un` klasen sakudida gi maseha manu hit guatu. Poresu na mana`ana`e` hit felisitasion gi ha`anen gupot pot ni unu gumugu`ot ha`aniña. Gaige pa`gu, agupa madispone ni Saina.

■ ■ ■

Deste antes dehemunos-yu` regalon Christmas sa` ti in` lañgag kumu famaguon mamopble. Tatnai hu tagam si Santa Claus ginen i mafanana`an "chimney" sa` ni unu guine mapegaye nu este na modun fasilidat. Ti bai` rikonose regalo gi papa` troñkun Christmas sa` ni tronku ham taya`. Nahoñg na regalo ginen un` dikiki` na kahita ni nina`en i Red Cross gi todu estudiante.

Lau gi katkuet finatton este na okasion todu i tiempu gaige gi nanan mame ni umasegura na mañaunau ham manmanagam ni finatton Jesus gi misan gayu yan `nai mattu gi gima`. Maseha haf` pinadesisimu añgoghu na siempre un` mana` libianu gi finatton i Metsia pa`gu na sakan.

"Ti humanau-yu`"

Megai na tautau isla ni mañasaga gi papa` areglon otru nasion tat kumu Hawaii, New Caledonia yan Tahiti sessu maplaiteha chumule` tatte `nai mangai sistema gobietnu antes de finatton Amerikanu yan Franses.

Este na diniseha oppan na tiempu gi tinige` mantitige` siha na tautau isla. Unu mañge` pot kinalamten natibun Hawaii ni dumiseha kumechule` tatte i sisteman antes ni fuetsau madestrosia ni militat yan manrikon industrian asukat.

Ilegña, "Hu guiguife pot antigu na tiempu ya ti siña-yu` hu bira tatte. Mananom-yu`choda yan sune gi tanu`. Ti siña hu bira-yu` tatte sa` tihu diñgu".

Kase i sustansian fino`ña pot relasion satbasion gi natibu ginen i usun tanu` niha deste antigu na tiempu. I estorian man-antigu na mañaina-ta mismu komomfitma este. Solu i tanu` `nai manla`la` pot mas ke 500 años. Esta pa`gu mangagaige ha` este siha na tanu`. In` kemprende sustansian relasion-ta yan tano`ta? Ti siña ta bira hit tatte sa` ni unabes `nai ta diñgu!

Estague` mina` presisu na maseha hafa guaha gi chagu` na karera-ta mauleg bes enkuando ta rikononose haf` tinatte-ta. I tanu` natibu mina` guaha aidentifikasion Chamorro ahe` ti asunton sudadanu `sino haf`gue`. Gaige nanata gi tanu`.

■ ■ ■

Gi kanton tasin iya Laulau, huli`e` man-mamigan na umañg yan ayuyu gi halom tasi. Era halom tasi `nai mapulalakes ña`ot niha dispues `nai manhanau halom gi tanu`. Ti tufuñgon i kantida na pinilakes niha.

■ ■ ■

Inadayao sensian niha `nai makonsidedera i kestat betde. `Nai mattu gi asuntun publiku kulan mohon manmamokat halom gi un` kansadu na lugat. Ma-atan dispues ma-abandona i lugat lau manestaba hit guihe man-e`ensinahyau. Dios ihu!

What is prayer's place?

By MICHAEL BRENDAN DOUGHERTY
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Just a few weeks after promoting the #PrayForParis hashtag campaign, the New York Daily News decided that prayer is a perverse response to the San Bernardino massacre. The tabloid's cover Thursday shouted "God Isn't Fixing This!" next to tweets from Republican presidential candidates, each one with the word "prayers" highlighted to embarrass them. The implication was that the politicians were hiding behind their prayers when they could be solving the "gun scourge."

The New York tabloid wasn't alone. The Huffington Post ran an article that extended the accusatory finger beyond politicians to the broader public on social media who offered their thoughts and prayers in messages of sympathy and grief. There was a simple takeaway: Screw your prayers, do something!

Of course it's annoying to see rote statements from politicians about their prayers. They feel scripted and repetitive now that America suffers through high-profile mass shootings on a regular basis. Besides, tweeting about prayers is a good indication that you're not actually praying. Or, at least, not praying well. (Matthew 6:5)

On the other hand, the public now demands statements from politicians about enormities even as they are unfolding. What else can they say?

The suddenly popular accusation that prayer is an ugly, insincere and insufficient response to tragedy misconstrues why people pray. Mary Elizabeth Williams, in a scorching essay for Salon on these empty gestures, wrote that "it's actually offensive for public figures who could take action to curtail gun violence to foist the burden of healing the broken lives that violence leaves behind on God."

But the truth is that people pray for things that our laws and government cannot provide: eternal rest for the victims, consolation for the bereaved, resolve and strength for first responders. They pray seeking understanding of God's will in a world marred by sin and death. Prayer doesn't exhaust all of our duties in a human tragedy, and nobody claims that it does. Believers hope that prayer will strengthen them to respond to tragedy with actions tempered by good will, wisdom and compassion. Politicians may be praying this way, and sincerely, even if their judgment leads them to different conclusions later. Even if their judgment is terrible.

An anti-prayer critic might respond: Politicians should instead publicly promise to work for policies that that would prevent future violence. And some did just that.

Perceiving the events at San Bernardino first as an issue of firearms control, not terrorism, Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders sent out messages about taking action to stop gun violence. Martin O'Malley named an enemy: the National Rifle Association.

Yet, like prayer, rote tweets urging us toward policy responses, whether they are aimed at controlling guns or discovering terror plots before they happen, demand a kind of blind faith and hope. Arguably they demand even more credulity than prayer.

If the American public suddenly acceded to restrictive gun control laws, mass shootings like the one in San Bernardino would likely happen from time to time anyway. Even those who support some new measures, myself included, must concede that the kinds of policies that would do the most to reduce firearm fatalities may have little or no effect on terrorist plots or determined mass shooters. After all, French gun control laws did not stop the Bataclan theater massacre. (And the use of explosive devices is an indication that the San Bernardino killers were more like the Paris attackers than, say, Dylann Roof or James Holmes.)

In the first hours after the shooting, I felt far more comfortable presuming that God is merciful and answers prayers than that my own views on gun control, or anyone else's, would turn out to be directly relevant.

I can open the Scriptures to find an account of God's mercy in the face of man's capacity for wickedness. I cannot, however, explain the dramatic decline of violent crime and gun homicide in America over the last two decades. Not when the country is constantly loosening its gun laws, and the national stockpile of privately held weapons keeps growing.

Without evidence, why should I assume that closing private-sales loopholes, imposing magazine limits or instituting more invasive background checks would have prevented the violence in San Bernardino? If only the Daily News' skepticism about the sincerity and efficacy of prayer extended just a little further.

The prayer-skeptics will work out their policy responses in fear and trembling as we learn more about the latest atrocity. I wish them luck. As a citizen, I'll dutifully consider them. As a pundit I'll offer criticism, hopefully constructive. Until then my thoughts return again and again to the victims. And even without intending, I start to pray.

Michael Brendan Dougherty writes about politics for the Week*. He is the founder of the* Slurve*, a newsletter about baseball. He wrote this for the* Los Angeles Times.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Clarification

To ensure there is no misunderstanding regarding the dollar figures cited in my recent letter to the editor, I want to ensure readers understand that no funds—from either the U.S. or the government of Japan—have been committed to the proposed action being studied under the CNMI Joint Training EIS, other than funding for the study itself.

The $300 million Japanese contribution is part of a total of over $900 million "identified for the CNMI" and both figures are for planning purposes only. No funding commitments can, or will, be made before a Record of Decision.

Craig Whelden
Executive Director
Marine Corps Forces Pacific

EDITORIAL

From Page 10

China in Africa: The Asian giant is expanding its influence

China is making a major push for influence in Africa, through trade and investment and its first overseas military base. India is also interested in the African market, but is not prepared to extend itself as far as China is and has no military ambitions there.

Both developments bear watching by the United States and Europe.

At a trade summit last Friday in Johannesburg, South Africa, Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged $60 billion not only in investment, but also in health, agriculture and infrastructure aid. His offer will be welcome to African nations, particularly those that had been riding high on their oil wealth before world prices dropped.

China is capable of providing African markets with inexpensive, necessary consumer items in return for commodities such as copper and iron ore. At the same time, its rollout of aid is not new. In the 1970s, for instance, it built the Tanzam railroad, from the Tanzanian port of Dar-es-Salaam on the Indian Ocean to Zambia's copper belt. Africa's consumer market is a billion people and is relatively unexploited among world markets.

The Asian giant has also announced its intention to establish a military base in Djibouti, a former French colony in northeast Africa along the Red Sea. It will be Beijing's first overseas base, perched on the edge of the Middle East. It will join America's only base in Africa, also in Djibouti, where thousands of U.S. troops, fighter-bombers and a drone operation are located. France and Japan also have bases there.

The United States has never shown itself capable of competing well for a significant economic role in Africa. It always lagged behind former colonial powers France, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Italy and Belgium. This inability has been a policy shortfall for America.

Now the Chinese are gaining influence on the continent. Regardless of whether an aggressive India becomes a competitor, too, the Americans and the Europeans must keep close tabs on the situation.

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The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. East winds 20 to 25 mph.
▲87° ▼77°

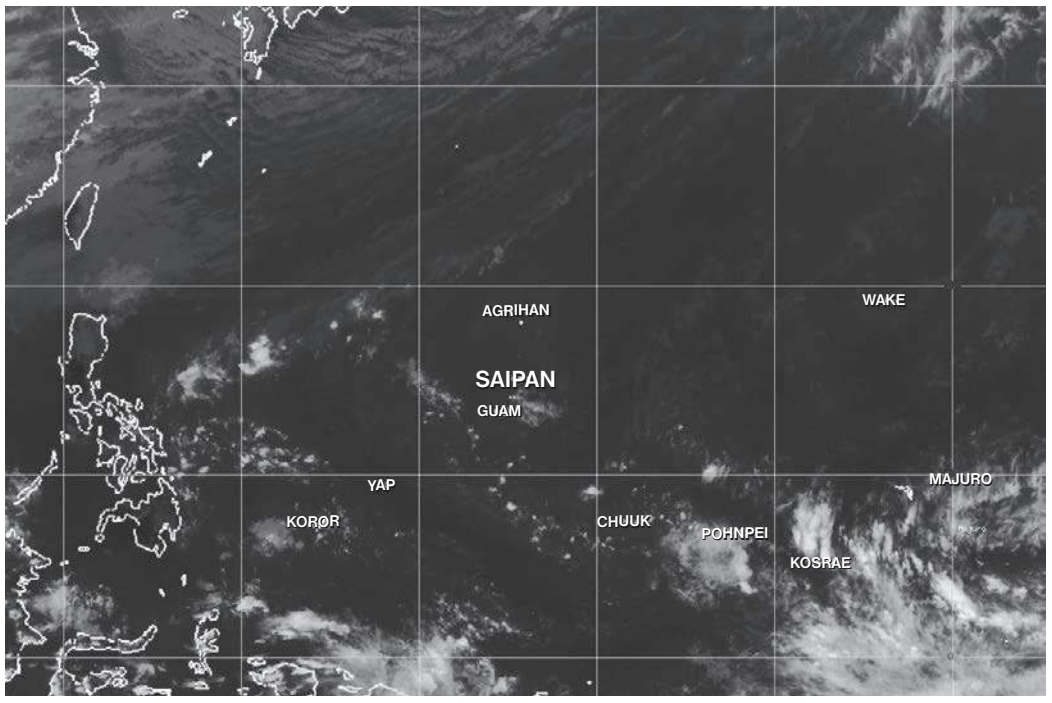
FRIDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 20 mph.
▲85° ▼77°

SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼77°

SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼77°

MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼77°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2015
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A near-equatorial trough stretches northeastward from 1N140E to a weak circulation centered west of Chuuk near 7N148E then turns to the southeast to end near EQ174E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are present between Guam and Chuuk between 5N and 12N from 145E to 155E near Pohnpei and Kosrae within 80 miles of a line from 8N155E to 5N161E and farther to the southwest of Pohnpei within 120 miles of 3N154E. Another trough extends northeastward from EQ166E to 7N174E. Extensive cloud cover scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are occurring near Majuro within 150 miles of a line from 8N171E to 3N180. Isolated thunderstorms are found between Kosrae and Kwajalein within 80 miles of a line from 11N166E to EQ164E. A frontal boundary extends southwestward from 25N149E to beyond 130E at 20N. Cloudiness and patchy showers are seen along and up to 200 miles northwest of this boundary.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼79
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼78
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼78
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼79
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼78
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼80
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼80

Around the Globe

Auckland	Cloudy	▲68	▼61
Beijing	Sunny	▲46	▼22
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲73	▼61
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲84	▼74
London	Rain	▲54	▼44
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲77	▼53
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲94	▼75
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲79	▼56
Miami	Showers	▲78	▼68
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲55	▼49
Osaka	Showers	▲61	▼59
Paris	Partly Cloudy	▲45	▼39
Pusan	Showers	▲62	▼49
Rome	Partly Cloudy	▲61	▼42
Salem	Showers	▲54	▼44
San Francisco	Cloudy	▲62	▼57
Seoul	Cloudy	▲54	▼37
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	▲61	▼55
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	▲57	▼44

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

12:57 AM	Today	Low Tide:	-0.2 Feet
7:42 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
1:05 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.1 Feet
6:15 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Friday	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Saturday	6:33 AM	5:48 PM
Sunday	6:34 AM	5:48 PM
Monday	6:34 AM	5:48 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	5:10 AM	4:57 PM
Friday	6:02 AM	5:45 PM
Saturday	6:55 AM	6:37 PM
Sunday	7:48 AM	7:31 PM
Monday	8:40 AM	8:26 PM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 4, 2015

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA2924	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA2922	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA2921	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA2920	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA2928	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA2926	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA2921	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA2921	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ628	3:50am	7:40am	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:30am	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA2924/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA2924/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2924/183	4:15am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2924/183	4:15am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:30pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:50pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	2:20pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA5038/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA5072/191	9:50pm	7:20am+1	1, 6 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ628/721	3:50am	12:50am	Daily via ICN
UA2924/159	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2922/159	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2921/159	1:30pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/159	2:20pm	10:35pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA2923	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA2925	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA2921	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA2920	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA2927	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA2929	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA2920	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA2920	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:35am	3:10pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
OZ627	9:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10pm	3:30am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/2929	9:55am	9:20pm	2, 6, 7 via GUM
UA190/2929	10:00am	9:20pm	3 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ702/627	12:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA2925	10:05pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	11:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2920	11:59pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	11:59pm	5:35pm+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2929	11:59pm	9:20pm+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/627	2:20pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
UA116/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA116/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA116/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

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DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Business

FAA approval near, Honda's business jet about to hit market

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP)—Nearly 30 years after Honda's founder started developing the product and after more than a dozen years of testing, the company best known for its cars and motorcycles is about to start delivering its first aircraft.

The Japan-based company this week is expected to receive a crucial Federal Aviation Administration certification of its first HondaJet, the last step before launching full production from its manufacturing hub and headquarters in Greensboro, North Carolina, where it employs more than 1,000. A company announcement is expected Wednesday.

The business jet, which can seat up to seven and lists for about $4.5 million, will be reaching customers at least five years behind schedule. Honda says it has received more than 100 orders, primarily from customers in North America and Europe.

Michael Whalen, a hospitality industry executive, says he placed a deposit for a HondaJet in 2007 to replace his slower, propeller-driven King Air. Whalen is founder and CEO of a company that runs hotels and restaurants in a half dozen Midwestern states from Moline, Illinois, a city with few direct flights. Now his Heart of America Group is expanding into Wyoming, Colorado and Texas.

"In the last year or so it certainly would have been coming in handy, so I've been inquiring quite regularly as to when they thought it was coming," said Whalen, who now expects delivery in March.

HondaJet's model HA-420 is expected to be the first in a line of Honda aircraft. That could make the quality-conscious, price-competitive company a player in aviation since "anywhere Honda gets into, they tend to grab a significant market share fairly quickly," said Wayne Plucker, who heads aerospace industry research at the consulting firm Frost & Sullivan. Honda touts its plane as lighter, faster and more fuel-efficient than competitors that include U.S.-based Cessna and Embraer of Brazil.

Facebook lifts ban on content from rival social network Tsu

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Facebook has lifted a ban that blocked material from Tsu.co, a small rival challenging the world's largest social network's financial dependence on free content shared by its 1.5 billion users.

The reversal comes a month after The Associated Press published a story airing concerns that Facebook might be abusing its power to thwart competition and stifle the concept advanced by Tsu that people should be paid for the stories and images that they post on social networks.

"We won in the court of public opinion," Tsu CEO Sebastian Sobczak said Tuesday. "When you have something new and novel in the market like what we are doing, this kind of validation is extremely important. It feels like we just got a golden stamp of approval."

The dispute between one of the Internet's most powerful companies and Tsu began in late September when Facebook removed nearly 10 million posts containing links and other references to Tsu (pronounced "soo"). Facebook also blocked attempts to post anything else that sent traffic to Tsu.co, both on the pages of its social network or on in its popular Messenger and Instagram applications.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Boston College: 80 sickened after eating at Chipotle

BOSTON (AP)—'Boston College said Tuesday the number of students complaining of gastrointestinal symptoms after eating at a Chipotle this weekend has climbed to 80, up from the 30 it reported the previous day. The illnesses prompted the temporary closure of a Chipotle restaurant in Boston where the students ate, and come as the chain's sales are already being slammed by a multistate outbreak of E. coli linked to its restaurants. Chipotle says it thinks the Boston College illnesses are an isolated case of norovirus and unrelated to the E. coli cases that have turned up in nine states. "All of the evidence we have points in that direction," said Chris Arnold, a Chipotle spokesman. Boston College said it is working with state health officials and that all students who reported symptoms have been tested for both E. Coli and norovirus.

Wealthy environmentalist Tompkins dies in Chile accident

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP)—Douglas Tompkins, a wealthy U.S. businessman and environmental activist who bought up large swaths of land in South America's Patagonia region with the aim to keep them pristine, has died. He was 72. Tompkins died Tuesday from severe hypothermia in a kayaking accident in Chile, authorities said. The Aysen health service said Tompkins, who was a co-founder of The North Face and Esprit clothing companies, was boating with five other foreigners when their kayaks capsized in a lake in the Patagonia region of southern Chile. Tompkins died in the intensive care unit of the hospital in Coyhaique, a town 1,700 kilometers (1,056 miles) south of Santiago. "He had lost consciousness and wasn't breathing" when brought to the hospital by helicopter, Dr. Carlos Salazar told local television stations.

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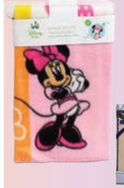

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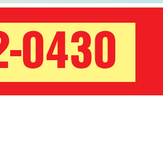

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Nation

House tightens controls on visa-free travel to US

WASHINGTON (AP)—Driven by the Paris terror attacks, the House voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to tighten controls on travel to the U.S. and require visas for anyone who's been in Iraq or Syria in the previous five years.

The legislation takes aim at the "visa waiver" program that allows citizens of 38 countries to travel to the U.S. for stays of 90 days and less without first obtaining a visa from an embassy or consulate. Belgium and France, home to most of the perpetrators of last month's Paris attacks, are among the participating countries.

The bill, which passed 407-19, would institute a series of changes, including the new visa requirement for citizens of Iraq, Syria and any other country deemed a terrorist hotspot, along with anyone who's traveled to those countries in the previous five years. Exceptions are made for official government visits and military service.

Countries in the visa waiver program would also be required to share counterterror information with the U.S. or face expulsion from the program. All travelers would be checked against Interpol databases, and visa waiver countries would be required to issue "e-passports" with biometric information.

AP

Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., speaks with a reporter following a closed-door GOP caucus meeting at the Republican National Headquarters on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2015.

"You have more than 5,000 individuals that have Western passports in this program that have gone to Iraq or Syria in the last five years," said Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy. "Those are gaps that we need to fix."

Some 20 million visitors come to the U.S. annually under the visa waiver program. They already are screened through an online system maintained by the Department of Homeland Security, and the White House has recently announced a series of improvements to that and other aspects of the program.

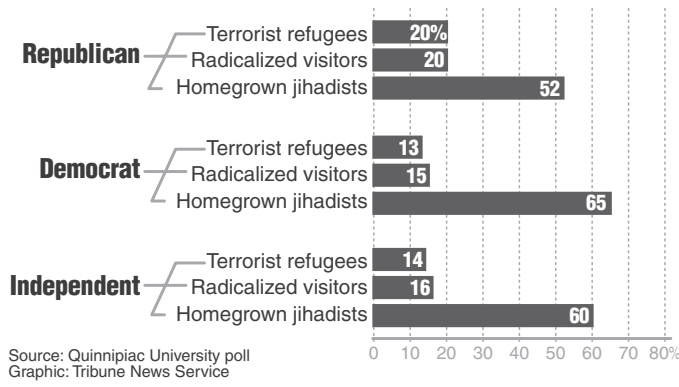
But in past years, the program has been used by would-be terrorists, including "shoe bomber" Richard Reid, who boarded a flight from Paris to Miami in December 2001 without a visa and attempted to set off a bomb. Zacarias Moussaoui, the "20th hijacker" from 9/11, also flew from London to Chicago with a French passport and no visa in February 2001, according to a Homeland Security Inspector General report from 2004.

Lawmakers of both parties spoke in favor of the legislation, which is also backed by the White House. It's a rare area of bipartisan agreement after the Obama administration's fury when the House passed legislation last month cracking down on the Syrian refugee program in the immediate aftermath of the Paris attacks.

The Syrian refugee bill, which the administration said was unnecessary because the small number of Syrian refugees are already extensively screened, has not gone anywhere in the Senate and looks unlikely to advance. The visa waivers bill, on the other hand, may be added to a must-pass year-end spending bill now being finalized on Capitol Hill.

Are refugees a threat?

Which do you think poses a greater terrorist threat to the U.S., terrorists hiding among Syrian refugees, radicalized foreign visitors, or so-called "homegrown jihadists"



Source: Quinnipiac University poll
Graphic: Tribune News Service

Legal experts agree: Trump's proposal unconstitutional

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—Donald Trump's call to block all Muslims from entering the United States is not only unconstitutional, but also impossible to carry out, legal experts said Tuesday.

Trump's proposed ban, announced to cheers at a rally in South Carolina Monday, would apply to immigrants and visitors alike, a sweeping prohibition affecting all adherents of a religion practiced by more than a billion people worldwide.

Beyond inciting condemnation from Republican presidential rivals, GOP leaders and others, legal and immigration experts said Tuesday that Trump's proposal violated the Constitution's equal protection clause and freedom of religion granted under the First Amendment.

"It is blatantly unconstitutional and it's an attack on the very foundation of the United States," said Marci Hamilton, a law professor specializing in the First Amendment at Yeshiva University in New York City. She called his idea "laughable."

"It's never possible to fully ascertain what someone believes internally," Hamilton added. "How does one recognize a Muslim, a Christian or a Jew? Do you look at where they were born, do you look at where they were raised? Do you look at the last religious service they attended?"

Trump's proposal amounts to a religious test for anyone wanting to enter the country, something that is unprecedented in U.S. history, said Nancy Morawetz, a professor of Clinical Law at the New York University School of Law.

"If one has this kind of a rule, you have to figure out how you're going to test it and verify it," Morawetz said. "What this really means is there would be a religious identity card."

Even an anti-immigration group that for decades has advocated curtailing the influx of immigrants to the U.S. disavowed Trump's religion-based exclusion.

"Nobody's interested in selecting people solely on their religion or their faith," said Dan Stein, president of the Washington-based Federation for American Immigration Reform.

Trump's comments highlight the broader concern over the immigrant vetting process, Stein said.

"Donald Trump is unartful, but it seems to us what he's really putting his finger on is this broader question of suspending a significant swath of immigration until this country can reassert a better screening process," Stein said.

U.S. immigration law has some "very, very ugly history" where people have been turned away based on their nation of origin, but never on their religion, Morawetz said.

California shooting shows difficulty ID'ing attackers

LOS ANGELES (AP)—By the time the married couple who carried out the deadly San Bernardino attack came to the attention of police, it was far too late.

Syed Rizwan Farook and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, had gone undetected while planning the massacre that included amassing thousands of rounds of ammunition, high-powered guns and pipe bombs.

The FBI's acknowledgement that the San Bernardino shooters had been radicalized Muslims for "quite some time" points to the difficulty discovering potential terrorists who keep a very low profile and shows the deadly consequences that can occur when identification comes too late.

"It appears these people were very good at hiding their intentions," said David Schanzer, a Duke University public policy professor who runs a center that studies terrorism. "What this situation shows is it's not a fool-proof system. ... A hundred percent prevention is not achievable."

The couple, who lived quietly in a two-bedroom townhouse with their 6-month-old daughter and Farook's mother, had not come to the attention of law enforcement before clothing themselves in black, donning face masks and bursting into an annual festive meeting of Farook's county health department colleagues with guns blazing. They killed 14 people and wounded 21 last Wednesday before dying in a shootout with police about four hours later.

David Bowdich, chief of the FBI's Los Angeles office, told reporters the agency was searching for how and where radicalization occurred and who might have led them to those beliefs.

Investigators believe Malik radicalized before meeting Farook, FBI spokeswoman Laura Eimiller said Tuesday, though she didn't elaborate on what led the FBI to that conclusion. Farook, 28, a restaurant inspector born in the U.S. to a Pakistani family, radicalized before Malik, 29, emigrated to the U.S. from Pakistan in July 2014 on a fiancée visa and married him the next month.

ACROSS THE NATION

Police step up mosque patrols after discovery of pig's head

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Philadelphia police will step up patrols around worship sites as they look for the person who left a severed pig's head outside a city mosque. The police department meanwhile hopes to enhance security video that shows someone throwing the animal's head out the passenger door of a red pickup truck, Commissioner Charles Ramsey said Tuesday. No arrests have been made in the Sunday night incident outside the Al Aqsa Islamic Society in west Philadelphia. The Quran, the holy book of Islam, prohibits Muslims from eating pork, and pigs have been used to taunt or offend Muslims. Last year, attackers in Greece left a pig's head and painted anti-Muslim slogans outside an Islamic studies center in Athens. Similar incidents have also occurred in France. In Philadelphia, a caretaker told police he found the head near the door of the mosque when he arrived for work Monday morning. A day later, Mayor Michael Nutter pledged a $2,000 reward for information leading to a conviction in any hate crime case. Nutter, who leaves office next month, took the opportunity to respond to Donald Trump's talk of banning Muslims from entering the U.S. The mayor suggested that his city banish the Republican presidential candidate.

Georgia set to execute man for killing his mother's friend

ATLANTA (AP)—A Georgia man convicted of forging checks and killing a close friend of his mother is scheduled to be executed Tuesday evening despite his claims of innocence. Brian Keith Terrell, 47, was to receive a lethal injection planned at 7 p.m. at the state prison in Jackson. He was convicted in the June 1992 killing of John Watson in Covington, a community about 35 miles east of Atlanta. Defense lawyers said Terrell is innocent, that no physical evidence connects him to the crime and prosecutors used false and misleading testimony to get the conviction. State lawyers say courts already have heard and rejected the defense arguments. The Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles, the only entity with authority to commute a death sentence in the state, on Monday denied Terrell's request for clemency. He filed appeals Tuesday after state and federal courts rejected his challenges.

Girl who lost family in fire wants lots of Christmas cards

SCHENECTADY, N.Y. (AP)—A little girl whose father and three siblings died in an arson fire has a simple holiday wish: She wants enough holiday cards to fill up her Christmas tree. Safyre Terry is the sole survivor of the blaze that killed her family two years ago. Safyre, now 8, has endured many surgeries for burns over 75 percent of her body. Her custodial aunt, Liz Dolder, said Tuesday that Safyre was "over the moon" when the first card arrived. But Dolder said the family was unlikely to receive enough cards to fill the card tree. Dolder posted a photo of Safyre on Facebook and told of her wish. She's been deluged with responses. Dolder says "it's just magical. She's so excited." The address for cards is P.O. Box 6126, Schenectady, NY, 12306.

Asia

Unhealthy smog hovers over Beijing on Day 2 of smog alert

BEIJING (AP)—Unhealthy smog hovered over downtown Beijing as limits on cars, factories and construction sites kept pollution from spiking even higher Wednesday, on the second of three days of restrictions triggered by the city's first red alert for smog.

Cars with even-numbered license plates were kept off roads, and schools and constructions sites remained closed. Far fewer than usual pedestrians walked the streets—many of them wearing white masks to filter the air.

■■■

BEIJING (AP)—Episodes of nauseating smog lasting several days have become part of wintertime in the Chinese capital, and for many Beijing residents face masks have become a routine cold-weather accessory, along with hats and gloves.

Despite efforts to improve the air, levels of contamination a dozen times the World Health Organization safe level are not unusual, and the city issued a red alert for smog this week, keeping schools closed and half the vehicles off the streets.

Not content with just the industrial white variety of mask, many Beijingers make a fashion statement while filtering out the pollution. Masks with patterns, textures, logos, messages and cutesy animals bring some color to the gray haze.

■■■

Insurance and water purifier saleswoman Zhang Jingtie said she had no choice but to be out despite restrictions through Thursday that have prompted some businesses to close and some others to allow employees to work from home.

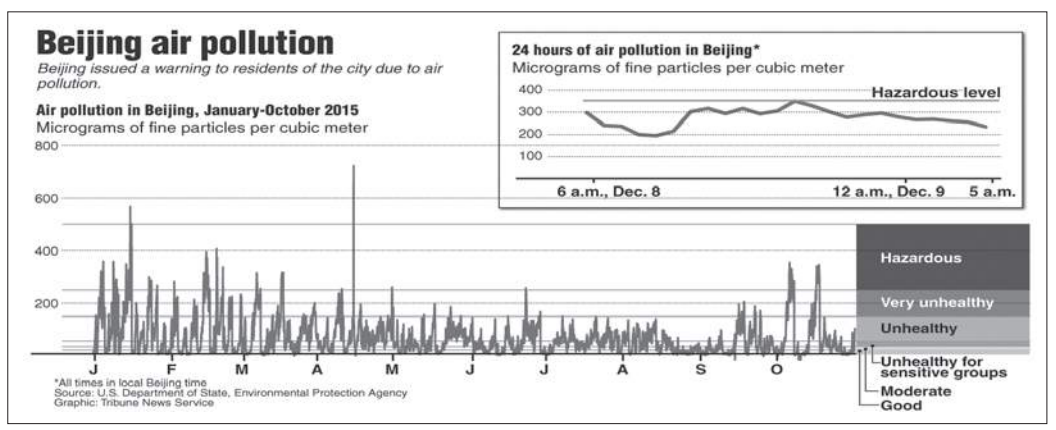
"I stay outdoors most of the time, so I am very worried that I may have cancer if I continue to live in this kind of air for long time," said Zhang, 25. "So, we really need to do something to protect the environment."

Pollution levels midday in downtown Beijing were mostly between 250 and 300 on the city's air quality index—suggesting the restrictions were having an effect. The city's alert was triggered by a forecast Monday that pollution levels would be above 300 for three days straight.

The index is strongly linked to levels of the dangerous tiny particles PM2.5, which at midday ranged from about 200 to 250 micrograms per cubic meter downtown—or 8 to 10 times the safe level recommended by the World Health Organization.

AP

In this combination of photos from the first week of December 2015, men and women wear masks to protect from air pollutants in Beijing.



Japan launches anti-terrorism unit ahead of summit and Olympics

TOKYO (AP)—Japan launched a new counterterrorism unit in an air of secrecy Tuesday, with journalists only allowed to photograph its 24 members from behind.

The country is expanding its international espionage work after being shocked by the deaths of five Japanese citizens at the hands of Islamic militants this year. The recent Paris attacks have also raised fears ahead of a Group of Seven summit in Japan next year and the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020.

It's mostly uncharted territory for Japan, which has never suffered a terror attack by outsiders in its modern history.

"The country is inexperienced, and its counterterrorism capability is untested," said Motonobu Abekawa, a former official at the Public Security Intelligence Agency and a terrorism studies expert at Nihon University. "People have long thought terrorist attacks are a distant problem abroad."

Japan began exploring ways to boost public safety and intelligence after the Islamic State group killed two Japanese hostages in Syria early this year. An attack on tourists at a museum in Tunisia later claimed three more Japanese lives.

During the hostage crisis, Japan often appeared at a loss for quality intelligence. Japanese agents should develop their own sources so they don't have to rely on U.S. or British agents for information, Abekawa said.

"I hope eventually they can be counterparts of MI6 or the CIA," he said.

The new Counterterrorism Unit-Japan includes staff from the foreign and defense ministries, the National Police Agency and the Cabinet Intelligence and Research Office, Japan's version of the CIA.

Initially made up of four leaders and 20 Tokyo-based experts focusing on Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and north and western Africa, it eventually is to also include 20 intelligence officers assigned to overseas posts, possibly in Amman, Cairo, Jakarta and New Delhi.

Bangladesh police: Radical Islamist group killed Japanese

NEW DELHI (AP)—A suspected member of a banned Islamist group has confessed he fatally shot a Japanese agriculture researcher in northern Bangladesh in October, police said Tuesday.

Deputy Inspector General of Police Humayun Kabir said Masud Rana, believed to be a member of Jumatul Mujahedeen Bangladesh, told a magistrate on Monday that he and his accomplices attacked and killed Kunio Hoshi in Rangpur district.

Three assailants on a motorbike took part in the Oct. 3 killing, less than a week after an Italian aid worker was shot dead in the capital, Dhaka.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the killing, according to the SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors extremist organizations. However, the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina rejected the claim and investigators focused on local extremist groups, including Jumatul Mujahedeen Bangladesh.

It was not immediately clear when Rana was arrested. Kabir said the suspect had fled earlier and was detained when he recently returned home.

"We did not disclose details earlier for the sake of the investigation," Kabir said. He said Rana was a regional commander of the group and previously served a jail term because of his involvement with it.

Kabir said six people including Rana have been detained for alleged involvement in the killing.

There is concern that radicalization is on the rise in Muslim-majority Bangladesh after four secular bloggers, two foreigners and a publisher were killed, allegedly by Islamist radical groups, since February this year.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has blamed the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and its Islamist ally Jamaat-e-Islami, saying they were attempting to create chaos in the country for political gain. Both parties have denied the allegation.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Police arrest S. Korean suspect in blast at Tokyo war shrine

TOKYO (AP)—Police in Tokyo have arrested a South Korean man suspected of causing an explosion last month in a public restroom at a controversial shrine in Tokyo that honors Japanese war dead. The 27-year-old Jeon Chang-han was arrested Wednesday after he returned to Tokyo from South Korea for voluntary questioning, police officials said. No one was injured in the Nov. 23 explosion at the Yasukuni shrine. Police earlier said the suspect was identified from close-circuit TV and had left Japan after the blast. The shrine, which honors 2.5 million Japanese war dead, including executed war criminals, is a focal point for lingering tensions with Japan's neighbors over the country's aggression before and during World War II. Many families and tourists visit Yasukuni, which has a grandiose gate, giant cherry trees and a museum that pays homage to those who died in Japan's wars, including kamikaze pilots.

Indian, Afghan officials in Pakistan for regional conference

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Indian and Afghan officials are expected to attend a two-day conference in Pakistan. India's Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj arrived Tuesday as the conference got underway. Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani plan to jointly launch the main event, a ministerial conference, on Wednesday. Sharif was also expected to meet with Swaraj. Envoys from over two dozen countries are attending the "heart of Asia" initiative, which was inaugurated in Istanbul in 2011 and aims to promote peace in Afghanistan. Pakistan and Afghanistan have been trading accusations of supporting insurgents since Afghan peace talks brokered by Islamabad collapsed last summer. Archrivals India and Pakistan have taken steps to improve relations in recent months after tensions escalated in the disputed Kashmir region.

China criticizes closer US defense ties with Singapore

BEIJING (AP)—China has criticized enhanced U.S. defense ties with Singapore that include the deployment of U.S. Navy P-8 Poseidon surveillance aircraft to the Southeast Asian city state. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chuying said Tuesday that a stronger U.S. military presence runs counter to the interests of countries in the region. Hua's comments followed the signing of an enhanced defense cooperation agreement Monday between U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carton and Singapore Defense Minister Ng Eng Hen. The two officials also welcomed the inaugural deployment of the Poseidon aircraft from Dec. 7 to 14. Such planes form part of the U.S. military presence in and around the South China Sea, where China has been taking increasingly robust steps to uphold its sovereignty claims against neighbors such as Vietnam and U.S. ally the Philippines.

World

Life is slow to return to shattered Syrian city of Homs

HOMS, Syria (AP)—Once Syrian opposition fighters start pulling out of the last rebel-held area of Homs this week, the city once known as the "capital of the revolution" will fully return to government control.

But its inhabitants have only been trickling back, and many neighborhoods are still ravaged and deserted after more than four years of civil war—a sign of the enormous challenges the government faces in reasserting its authority over areas once held by the opposition.

The first stage of the rebel evacuation from the Waer neighborhood of Homs may begin as early as Wednesday, part of a truce reached between the government and the opposition. Government forces had blockaded Waer for nearly three years, only sporadically allowing in food.

The first batch of fighters is expected to include 300 to 700 gunmen, although some 3,000 fighters are believed to be holed up inside the neighborhood, which is separated from the rest of the city by the Orontes River.

The deal is similar to one struck in May 2014 in Homs' Old City. There, the government assumed control of the quarter after about 2,000 rebels were granted safe passage to opposition areas north of Homs. The area was destroyed and thousands of civilians were killed or forced to flee, and rebels surrendered only after they were starved and outgunned.

AP

A man is seen pushing his bicycle in an area adjacent to the Waer neighborhood in the central city of Homs, Syria on Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2015.

The international community is making its most serious push yet for a cease-fire and peace talks to end the conflict that began in 2011. Many hope that such local deals can be replicated across Syria to create pockets of peace and a climate conducive to talks leading up to a transitional government.

But the situation in Homs today points to the huge difficulties that lay ahead after the guns fall silent.

On a government-sanctioned trip this week to Syria's third-largest city, an Associated Press team found that little has changed from when the rebels first left 18 months ago. The streets have been cleared of rubble, but few people have returned.

In the ancient part of the city—a series of neighborhoods making up the 8-mile-long old quarter—the occasional sound of a hammer clanking on metal points to sporadic restoration work by few Syrians who have returned to reopen businesses amid battle-scarred and ravaged buildings.

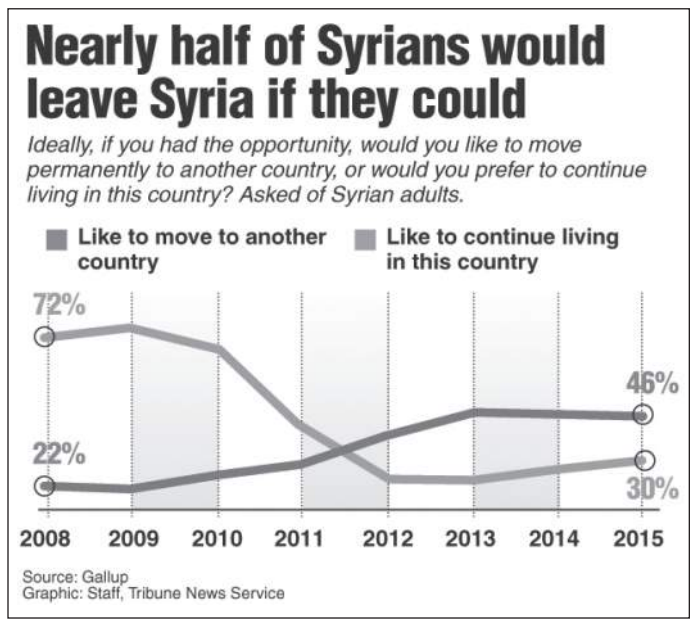
Of the 2,500 shops in the ancient, covered souk or marketplace, only five have reopened.

Among those is one owned by Maan Hbous, a 55-year-old businessman who returned in May and works as a contractor for others who want to return to their jobs.

He has fixed up his wrecked store, but it stands empty, except for a table and a few chairs where he receives visitors.

"We hope to reopen the souk in the next months," he said. "The reconciliation in Waer is important. We hope it will go ahead as this will be important for the return of co-existence and for the souk to return to what it was," he added.

Nour Saad, a 30-year-old owner of a shop on what was once known as the Jewelers' Street, is a widow raising two teenage boys on her own. Her husband was killed by rebel snipers in a Damascus suburb some time ago.



Russia launches new airstrikes in Syria; 1st from submarine

MOSCOW (AP)—Russia has unleashed another barrage of airstrikes against targets in Syria, including the first combat launch of a new cruise missile from a Russian submarine in the Mediterranean Sea, the country's defense minister said Tuesday.

The Kalibr cruise missiles launched by the Rostov-on-Don submarine successfully hit the designated targets in Raqqa, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu reported to President Vladimir Putin. The submarine was in a submerged position during the launch, he added.

Putin noted that the new cruise missile can be equipped with both conventional and nuclear warheads, adding he hopes that the latter "will never be needed."

Shoigu said Tu-22 bombers flying from their base in Russia also took part in the latest raids, performing 60 combat sorties in the last three days.

He said the targets destroyed in the latest wave of Russian airstrikes included a munitions depot, a factory manufacturing mortar rounds and oil facilities belonging to "terrorists."

Shoigu said the Russian military had informed Israel and the United States about the airstrikes before launching them. A U.S. defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss the matter publicly, confirmed that Russia notified the U.S. in advance.

The U.S. official said at least 10 cruise missiles were launched from Russian surface ships in the Caspian Sea and at least one missile was fired by a Russian submarine in the eastern Mediterranean.

Russia has carried out its air campaign in Syria since Sept. 30, using warplanes at an air base in Syria's coastal province of Latakia, as well as navy ships and long-range bombers flying from their bases in Russia. While Moscow said its action has been focused on the Islamic State group, the U.S. and its allies have criticized Moscow for also striking moderate rebel groups opposed to Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Shoigu told Putin that Syrian army forces had overtaken the area near the border with Turkey where a Turkish jet shot down a Russian warplane on Nov 24. He showed Putin the plane's flight recorder, which he said Syrian and Russian troops had recovered from the crash site.

A year in, detente with US reshapes Cuba's psychic landscape

HAVANA (AP)—An American flag whips in the wind above the reopened U.S. Embassy in Cuba. Tens of thousands of foreign visitors have strolled down the cobblestone streets of Old Havana in recent months, some booking their lodgings through Airbnb.

At the same time, a surge in Cubans seeking to leave the island before their preferential status for U.S. residency ends has flooded Central America with migrants in what could be the biggest exodus since the 1980 Mariel boatlift.

In the year since Presidents Raul Castro and Barack Obama announced a rapprochement between bitter the Cold War enemies, Cuba has been transformed, for better or worse. A country that once seemed stuck in time suddenly faces an uncertain future of disruptive change.

Particularly for those with money, property or connections, the frothy optimism is palpable, as are the expectations of greater prosperity and new freedoms. For others—the poor, the old, the vast ranks of bureaucrats who've dedicated their lives to the communist system, the dramatic dual presidential announcements of Dec. 17, 2014 and the steps toward normalization have led to feelings of fear.

Cubans with businesses have been buoyed since then by the prospect of better relations. Hotels, private bed-and-breakfasts and elegant restaurants have been packed, with hundreds more expected to open in the coming year.

Pope Francis, who played a critical role in negotiations that led to detente, made a stop in Cuba on his way to the United States in September. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry reopened the embassy in person in August.

"It's a breath of fresh air, knowing that they're filing away the rough edges between the two peoples and their governments, and that can open a path to a future of brotherhood and mutual aid," said Fernando Funes, a former government agronomist who runs a 20-acre environmentally friendly farm supplying vegetables such as arugula and chicory to private restaurants in Havana.

Those in favor of the warming in relations are hoping that the anniversary of the presidential announcements will add momentum to negotiations to connect the countries with commercial flights and direct mail, perhaps paving the way for a visit by Obama in the first half of next year.

But for others, the changes are happening much too fast.

Israel sentences female Palestinian lawmaker to 15 months in prison

JERUSALEM (AP)—An Israeli military court has sentenced a female Palestinian lawmaker to 15 months in prison after convicting her of belonging to an illegal organization and incitement, the army announced Tuesday, drawing angry denunciations from Palestinian leaders in the West Bank.

The sentencing of Khalida Jarrar marked the culmination of a case that has attracted widespread attention. Jarrar is a popular figure in the West Bank and known for her fiery speeches against Israel.

Jarrar was arrested last April in a raid on her home for allegedly violating Israeli travel restrictions that barred her from Ramallah, the West Bank city where her family lives. She was subsequently charged with incitement and membership in an illegal organization.

Palestinians say Jarrar, who is in her early 50s and the mother of two grown daughters who are pursuing advanced university degrees in Canada, was prosecuted for political reasons. They say the evidence against her was flimsy and that she poses no threat to public safety.

Israel's military courts try Palestinians charged with security offenses against Israel under a separate legal system from the one that serves Israelis. Critics say that Palestinians who are tried under the military courts are seldom acquitted and many, fearing they have little chance of proving their innocence, opt to accept the shorter sentences offered in plea bargains.

Hanan Ashrawi, a senior Palestinian official, said there was "no legal basis" for the sentencing. In a statement issued on behalf of the Palestine Liberation Organization's Executive Committee, she said it violated Jarrar's parliamentary immunity and called for her immediate release.

"The actions of the military court are politically motivated and are part of a deliberate attack on Palestinian politicians," she said. "It is high time for the dehumanization and the captivity of the Palestinian people to end."

Jarrar is a senior member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a secular, left-leaning Palestinian faction that opposes peace with Israel. The group, which was involved in hijackings and other attacks in the 1970s, has scaled back its militant activities in recent years.

In a statement, the Israeli army said Jarrar was convicted under a plea agreement on Sunday in a military court for her PFLP membership and for allegedly calling for Palestinians to kidnap Israeli soldiers in order to win the release of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. It said she will be credited for time served.

Environment

This June 2015 photo shows two of the elderly elephants that are part of the Mondulkiri Project in Mondulkiri Province in eastern Cambodia. The Mondulkiri Project aims to act as a sanctuary for elephants that previously worked for timber companies or as attractions in the tourists hub of Siem Reap. The project also seeks to give the local indigenous population jobs and curtail logging in the area.

KRISTI EATON/AP

Elephants get love and care in Cambodia, with tourists' help

By KRISTI EATON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEN MORONOM, Cambodia (AP)—The trip to the hills of eastern Cambodia had all the makings of a luxurious getaway: delicious fresh fruit fed by hand, a dip in a refreshingly cold watering hole and a relaxing massage.

But I wasn't receiving these amenities. Elderly elephants were. And I was one of several tourists paying for the privilege of doting on them.

At the Mondulkiri Project, it's not the people who call the shots, but the elephants. Visitors from all over the world come here for the chance to interact with the behemoth creatures by washing them, feeding them, playing with them and, of course, getting selfies with them. One thing that doesn't happen: riding on the animals' backs.

Named for Cambodia's most sparsely populated province, the Mondulkiri Project aims to act as a sanctuary for elephants that previously worked for timber companies or as attractions in the tourist hub of Siem Reap, home to the Angkor Wat site. The Mondulkiri Project also seeks to give the local indigenous population, called the Bunong, opportunities for jobs and help in curtailing logging and promoting forest conservation.

The Mondulkiri Project began in 2013, founded by the Tree family, who are not members of the Bunong community but who support the Bunongs with revenue from the Mondulkiri Project. The Tree family offers trekking along with the elephant experiences, and they run Tree Lodge, a bare-bones but comfortable set of bungalows with magnificent views of the Cambodian countryside.

During my stay, I joined several other tourists, both solo and group travelers, in cleaning and feeding the elephants. We also got an in-depth explanation of the project, its goals and why preserving the area is important.

Then came the fun part: getting up close and personal with the gigantic mammals. The elephants spend all their time in a protected area of the forest, with local guides watching over them. The elephants were friendly, hungry and eager to interact with us.

For the humans, there was a lunch of rice, vegetables, meat and iced coffee. Then an English-speaking Bunong guide led us on an easy trek through the lush jungles as we headed to a chilly watering hole to wash one of the creatures.

More photo opportunity than actual cleansing, the elephant seemed to enjoy getting his back scratched and didn't mind the picture-taking. We all had the same post-cleansing goal anyway: a nap.

Cardinal: If climate talks stall, the pope may gently intervene

LE BOURGET, France (AP)—If international climate talks really stall, don't be surprised if there might be an ever-so-slight intervention by Pope Francis.

Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace who helped draft the pope's June encyclical on global warming, said the pontiff has "deep trust" that negotiators in Paris will get the job done. But just in case they don't, the pope might possibly send a gentle message, he said.

"If it gets to a stalemate or whatever, he may utter a statement or make a comment or whatever, but he will refrain from exercising any coercive power on the things over here, because that would not belong to his style," Turkson told The Associated Press after a press conference by Vatican officials Tuesday at the Paris climate talks.

If the pope did intervene with a gentle statement if negotiations bog down, it would "show the gravity of the situation and highlight what's at stake," said Jennifer Morgan, global climate program director for the World Resources Institute.

Joe Ware, a protestant spokesman for Christian Aid, welcomed the remark, saying such action "would just give that final nudge to the negotiations."

There appeared to be no need for that just yet at the talks, where government ministers wrapped up Tuesday's session with no signs of the animosity that have plagued negotiations in the past. French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said a new draft agreement would be prepared by 1 p.m. (1200 GMT) Wednesday.

In Celebration of His New Life

†Herman Herbert Sablan Del Rosario

October 01, 1953 –December 03, 2015

In His New life, He now joins his:

Parents: †Juan Del Rosario
†Francisco A. Manahane and Magdalena S. Manahane
Parents- In- Law: †Pedro P. Duenas and Lucia A. Duenas (PPD)
Brothers: †Francisco S. Rosario
†Ronald S. Del Rosario
Brother-In-Law: †Albert A. Duenas
Sisters-In-Law: †Casilda S. Duenas
†Margarita D. Matagolai

His memories will forever live in the hearts of his .

Wife: **Rose Duenas Del Rosario – (PPD)**
Children: **Dorsha Jane** D./ Eduardo Jr. Guinto (Brandon, Donovan, Colton, Edward Jr., Aryana)
John Peter D. Del Rosario / Darrah Benavente (Aidin)
Tricia Rose D. Del Rosario / Joseph Reyes Jr. (Elerie Rose, Elicia Jo)
Tracy Lynn D. Del Rosario
Herman Herbert D. Del Rosario Jr.
Trianna Jamae D. Del Rosario
Reared Son: **Wilber** (PJ) Ngotel /Desiree Valdez (Leilani)
Brothers and Sisters:
John S./ Julie Del Rosario and Children
†**Francisco** S. Rosario and Children
†**Ronald** S. Del Rosario and Children
Manuel S./ Flora Manahane and Children
David S./ Shirley Manahane and Children
Emilio S./ Kumiko Manahane and Children
Luis S. Manahane and Children
Maria M. Michelson / John Michelson and Children
Ramon S./ Amier Manahane and Children
Jose S./ Bertha Manahane and Children
Francisca M./ Rusell Colvin and Children
Rita M. / Canice Taitano and Children
Anthony S./ Frances Manahane and Children
Brothers In Law/Sisters In Law and Children:
Thomas A./ Lisa Duenas and Children
Miguel / Bernie Aldan and Children
†**Margarita** D./ Roque Matagolai and Children
†**Albert** A./ Rosalia Duenas and Children
Pedro A. Jr./ Maria Duenas and Children
Lucy Duenas and Children
Josephine D./Mark Barber and Children
Evelyn D./ Paul Cangco and Children
Ramona A. Duenas-Jones / Richard Jones and Children

He will also be missed by her numerous aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, god children, relatives and friends.

Mass of Intentions for the repose of his soul are being celebrated daily at San Antonio Church at 06:00 p.m followed by Holy Rosary.

Funeral Services will be held on Saturday, December 12, 2015. His remains will be escorted from Nuestra Senora Dela Paz Memorial Chapel at 07:30 a.m to Our Lady Of Mount Carmel Cathedral. Responso Service will be held upon arrival of remain followed by Holy Rosary.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 a. m. Interment Service will be at 12:00 noon at Chalan Kanoa Cemetery, where he will be at a peaceful rest.

Please join us in prayers.
Thank you – Si Yu'us Maase

Rose Duenas Del Rosario , Children and Family

Life & Style

Harrison Ford promises older, wiser Solo in 'Force Awakens'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—When speaking about "Star Wars," there are few topics that inspire a twinkle in Harrison Ford's eyes.

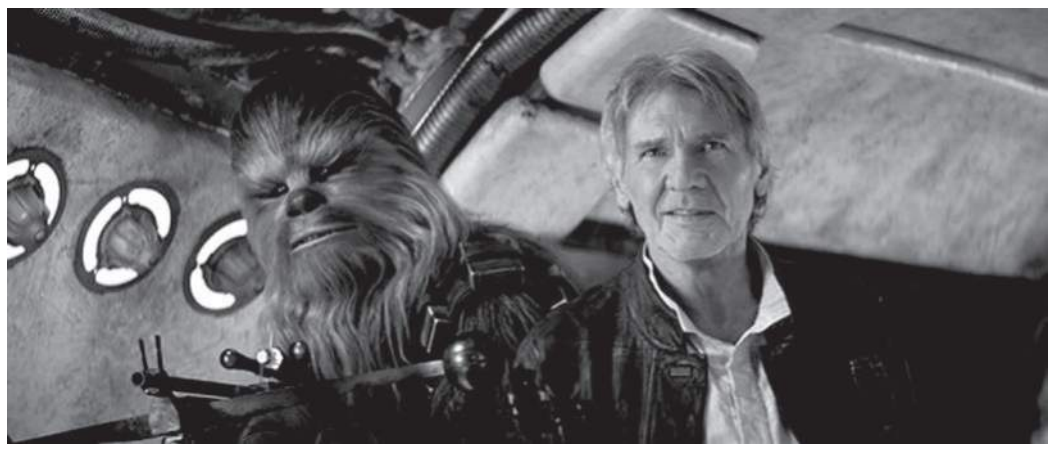
The 73-year-old actor is matter-of-fact about almost everything involving the sci-fi series' latest episode—from his reunion with Carrie Fisher ("It was no big deal.") to the franchise's unwavering popularity ("For me, it's old news.").

However, when Ford brings up his new co-stars, he lights up like the Millennium Falcon charging through hyperspace.

"The new, young actors Daisy Ridley and John Boyaga were well cast, well directed and are huge talents," he said, his gritty voice lifting, during a recent interview. "They come off really well in the movie. They carry the movie."

After more than 30 years, Ford is reprising his role as smart-aleck smuggler Han Solo in director J.J. Abrams' "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," out Dec. 18.

The iconic character, who hasn't been seen on screen since celebrating the fall of the Galactic Empire in 1983's "Return of the Jedi," serves as an unlikely mentor to scavenger Rey (Daisy Ridley), defector Finn (John Boyega) and pilot Poe Dameron (Oscar Isaac) as they team up to take on masked adversary Kylo Ren (Adam Driver) and his minions.



This photo provided by Lucasfilm shows Peter Mayhew as Chewbacca and Harrison Ford as Han Solo in "Star Wars: The Force Awakens." AP

While the film has been cloaked in an unparalleled level of secrecy, Ford guaranteed that fans can expect the same Solo they fell in love with from the original "Star Wars" trilogy. (Disney declined to screen "Force Awakens" for this story ahead of the Dec. 14 premiere).

"The shorthand is that he's older and wiser, but his bones are the same," Ford said. "He's not selling real estate now. He's the same guy—only with the passage of 30 years. While we do not sit down and describe what he's been doing for those years, we do discover in the context of the story what the complications have been in his life."

Ford, who infamously wanted George Lucas to kill off Solo in "Return of the Jedi," had a "why not?" attitude about suiting back up as Solo. He wasn't surprised by Disney's Death Star-sized plan to revive the franchise after acquiring Lucasfilm in 2012 for more than $4 billion. The studio is planning to release a stand-alone film about a young Solo in 2018.

"If you make a huge investment in a product and it pays off, there's wisdom in seeing whether the well has run dry," Ford said. "If the well has run dry, (expletive) admit it and go on to something else. This well has not dried, especially when you introduce new discoveries, which Daisy Ridley, John Boyega, Oscar Isaac and Adam Driver represent."

Despite embodying the intergalactic scoundrel in three films, the "Indiana Jones" star didn't feel the need to provide "Force Awakens" filmmakers with much insight into Solo, who is back alongside shaggy sidekick Chewbacca (Peter Mayhew).

"They wanted to know if I didn't like something, and we would talk about ways to fix it," Ford said. "That's what we do. It's a collaborative process. There wasn't much. (Lawrence) Kasdan was back. He was one of the writers from the original films. He has a keen understanding on how the beast works, so I think they produced a script that—in my mind—was very easy to work with."

Once he was back in a galaxy far, far away, Ford's reprisal was stopped short on the second day of production last year when a door on the Millennium Falcon set outside London fell on him. He broke his left leg and was grounded for months. The unexpected time off proved more frustrating than fruitful.

"I had been ready," he said. "I didn't have much to think about. I think it gave J.J. some more time to think about some of the scenes."

After his work on the postponed production eventually wrapped up, Ford endured another mishap involving a flying machine. The aeronautical aficionado suffered several injuries when his vintage plane's engine failed and crashed in Santa Monica, Calif.

The accidents haven't stopped Ford from returning to the sky.

"Oh, (expletive) no, I fly all the time," said Ford, with his eyes glowing again. "I want to spend more time flying. That's what I want to do."

Q&A: 'Force Awakens' director on best way to watch his movie

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP FILM WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—J.J. Abrams can't really settle on a favorite moment from his saga of directing, co-writing and co-producing "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," but this one isn't bad.

"Being here now means we're actually finished with the movie, which is a relief," Abrams said with Jedi calm.

Perched in a small living room setup inside the cavernous Los Angeles Convention Center, this is the final stretch of Abrams' journey to this galaxy far, far away and back again, which started nearly three years ago.

The Associated Press spoke with Abrams at a weekend media event in advance of the Dec. 18 release of "The Force Awakens." The remarks have been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: Lucasfilm's creative executive Pablo Hidalgo helped you answer questions about the "Star Wars" universe during the making of the film. Did you ever stump him?

ABRAMS: He was not only unstumpable but he was immediate. I would send him an email at almost any hour asking some arcane question and I'd hit send and I'd hear "ding" and he'd already have responded with an answer. What you realize, by the way, in working on these movies is that even things that are canon, that are beloved and absolute to fans, are very much fluid and in flux. For example, the Millennium Falcon itself, the cockpit changed dramatically from the first to the second movie. It's much bigger in "The Empire Strikes Back." Even things that are even the most fundamental and beloved are changing before our eyes and we don't even notice it.

Abrams

AP: Was there anything you were surprised the powers that be let you do?

ABRAMS: I was most surprised that the studio never said no. That's incredible to me.

AP: What do you think is the ideal way to watch "The Force Awakens"?

ABRAMS: As someone who really hasn't been the most vocal advocate of 3-D, the strangest thing happened to me on this. When I was watching the reels in 3-D, there were a number of shots—and I know this sounds insane—that I hadn't understood in the three-dimensional space quite the way I did when I saw them in 3-D. I actually felt that there were things that were playing better in 3-D. I had never felt that before. And if people have access to a theater that has laser projection, it is shockingly better.

AP: Really?

ABRAMS: You cannot compare a traditionally projected image with a laser image. The blacks are true blacks. It's almost as if you have to adjust to it.

AP: But definitely theatrical?

ABRAMS: The thing that is so fun about "Star Wars," and I remember this from when I was a kid, was the communal experience of being with hundreds of people and getting to scream and laugh and cheer and cry with the story. It's got that kind of a pulse and that kind of an engine. Though I love that we all have access to movies on the devices in our pockets and I love that home screens are often better than theater 17 at the multiplex, I also feel like movies speak to a human desire, if not need, to congregate and to experience stories communally. They're experiences that allow us to feel that connectivity, which is truly what "Star Wars" is all about—the Force and the idea that we're all connected. In whatever format it is, whatever screening, whatever the best available version is, I would just argue that, if possible, to try to see it with a crowd.

AP: This has been one of the most tightly guarded, high-profile releases in film history. When do you think it's appropriate for audiences to start talking and posting about spoilers?

ABRAMS: I think that as people do and as I'm sure that they will, after the first screening of this movie, that aspect will be over, the secrecy. It's not so much that we feel like the movie doesn't work if you know what happens, but I do feel like part of the magic of a movie, and certainly "Star Wars," is to know as little as possible for as long as possible. But I know that people will start talking about what happens immediately.

AP: Are you at peace with your decision to directly only one?

ABRAMS: It's a bittersweet choice. On one hand, I felt like if this movie works for people, then that's the way you want to go out. You don't want to necessarily have to top something that worked. And if it's a disaster, no one would want me to direct the next one anyway. It was only a win.

The Lennon gun: Could it happen the same way now?

NEW YORK (AP)—On a cold night 35 years ago, Mark David Chapman waited for John Lennon outside the New York City apartment building where the former Beatle lived with his wife, Yoko Ono, and his son. When Lennon appeared shortly before 11 p.m., Chapman opened fire with a Charter Arms .38-caliber pistol. Here's a look at how he easily circumvented New York's restrictive gun laws, and whether it would be possible today.

WHERE DID IT COME FROM? Chapman bought the gun legally six weeks before the shooting from J&S Sales Ltd., a shop in Honolulu, Hawaii, where Chapman had been living. He reportedly paid $169. Chapman had a permit and no police record and the dealer wouldn't have had any reason to block the sale.

HOW DID IT GET TO NEW YORK? Authorities at Honolulu's airport said Chapman probably got the gun past airport security simply by placing it in his luggage. At the time, baggage checked with an airline was not searched or X-rayed. Chapman flew first to Atlanta, then on to New York City.

SINCE HE HAD A PERMIT, WAS THE GUN LEGAL? No. New York does not recognize the validity of handgun permits issued in other states. Out-of-towners who bring handguns into the city frequently face criminal charges, even if they have a license elsewhere.

COULD CHAPMAN FLY WITH HIS GUN TODAY? Air travelers are still able to take a gun with them on a flight as long as they declare the weapon, unload it, lock it in a hard case and check it in their luggage. Security experts say there's nothing to prevent people who follow proper security procedures from collecting the firearm from the baggage carousel at the destination airport, even if the weapon is illegal to possess in the jurisdiction to which they have traveled. "The airline knows the gun is there, the TSA knows, and you're declaring it, but they're not doing the second piece, which is asking whether the firearm is licensed in the ultimate destination where you're going," said attorney Jeremy Saland, who represents gun owners in airport arrest cases. "It's an extra headache for them."

A spokesman for the U.S. Transportation Security Administration said Tuesday that the agency's screening procedures are designed to detect potential threats to aviation and aviation passengers.

"While we notify law enforcement during the security screening procedures if an officer discovers an item that may violate the law, it is the passenger's responsibility to know and abide by the law," the spokesman said.

SO, IS NEW YORK CITY'S BAN EVER ENFORCED AT AIRPORTS? It does get enforced at New York airports, but usually only on outbound flights. Saland said he gets about 15 calls a year from out-of-state gun owners who have been arrested at New York airports trying to leave with the firearm in their checked baggage. The National Rifle Association has been lobbying for a federal law that would require states to honor gun permits issued in other states.

WHERE'S CHAPMAN'S GUN NOW? The revolver is stored behind bullet-resistant glass at the Forensic Investigative Division in Queens, New York, where it has been in police custody for 35 years, stored alongside the gun wielded by "Son of Sam" killer David Berkowitz. The division has about 800 guns, most of which are hung on the walls.

WHAT ABOUT CHAPMAN? Chapman waited for police to arrive and was arrested. He pleaded guilty after initially planning to mount an insanity defense. Chapman is serving a 20 years-to-life sentence at Wende Correctional Facility in western New York. He was denied parole in August 2014. He is eligible again next year.

"Your actions have devastated a family and those who loved the victim," the parole board said in denying the application.

'Empire,' 'Creed' lead Image Awards nominations

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Empire" leads the television nominees at the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's Image Awards.

The musical drama is up for 12 trophies at the ceremony honoring diversity in the arts, including acting nominations for Terrence Howard, Taraji P. Henson, Bryshere Y. Gray, Jussie Smollett and Grace Gealey.

"Empire" will face off at the NAACP Image Awards against "Being Mary Jane," ''How to Get Away with Murder," ''Power" and "Scandal" for in the outstanding TV drama category.

"black-ish" followed behind "Empire" with 10 nominations in the TV honors. The family comedy will compete against "House of Lies," ''Key & Peele," ''Orange Is the New Black" and "Survivor's Remorse" in the outstanding TV comedy category.

"Rocky" sequel "Creed" was king of the ring with six nods in the film categories. Other nominees up for the outstanding motion picture prize are "Beasts of No Nation," ''Concussion," ''Dope" and "Straight Outta Compton."

"Creed" star Michael B. Jordan is also up for the ceremony's entertainer of the year, nominated alongside Misty Copeland, Pharrell Williams, Shonda Rhimes and Viola Davis.

The awards will be presented in a Feb. 6 ceremony airing on the TV One channel.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Judge finalizes drummer Mick Fleetwood's divorce

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Mick Fleetwood and his wife have finalized their divorce, ending a nearly two-decade marriage. Court records obtained Tuesday show a judge granted the Fleetwood Mac co-founder's divorce from Lynn Frankel Fleetwood on Nov. 20. The judgment does not contain any details on how the pair, who were married in July 1995, will divide their assets. It also does not state how the drummer and his ex-wife will handle custody of their 13-year-old twin daughters or whether child support will be paid. The Grammy Award winner filed for legal separation in March 2013, and the petition was later turned into a divorce case.

Queen Latifah to star in Lee Daniels' drama pilot

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Queen Latifah is starring in a new drama pilot from filmmaker Lee Daniels, the co-creator of Fox TV's "Empire." The untitled Fox pilot is about three young women trying to make it in the music industry. Latifah plays Carlotta, a beauty salon owner who becomes a surrogate mom to the trio, the network said. After open auditions, three newcomers were cast as the aspiring singers: Jude Demorest and Ryan Destiny, both from Detroit, Michigan, and Brittany O'Grady from Washington, D.C. Musician-actress Latifah starred in NBC's live production of "The Wiz" last week and played the famed blues singer Bessie Smith in the Emmy-winning HBO movie, "Bessie." The pilot, which could be the basis for a series, begins production this month in Atlanta.

Melanie Griffith and Antonio Banderas' divorce finalized

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Melanie Griffith and Antonio Banderas' marriage is officially over.

A Los Angeles judge finalized the actors' divorce Friday and the judgment was released Tuesday. Griffith filed for divorce in June 2014 after 18 years of marriage.

They first worked together on the set of the 1995 romantic comedy "Two Much." Banderas later directed his wife in the 1999 film "Crazy in Alabama." They have a 19-year-old daughter together.

The pair's divorce judgment divides the actors' interests in several films, including several movies in the "Shrek" franchise.

Banderas has served as the voice of the animated character Puss in Boots in the "Shrek" films. Griffith has recently turned to television work, guest-starring in "Hawaii Five-0" and "Raising Hope."

The judgment was first reported by celebrity website TMZ.

AP
This Sept. 7, 2008 file photo shows actors Antonio Banderas, right, and his wife Melanie Griffith at the gala premiere of "The Other Man" at the Toronto International Film Festival in Toronto.

ABC stepping up with a new version of 'Dirty Dancing'

AP
In this Sept. 21, 2015 file photo, Abigail Breslin arrives at the LA premiere screening of "Scream Queens" at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre in Los Angeles.

NEW YORK (AP)—ABC is stepping out with a new production of "Dirty Dancing."

The network said Tuesday it will film a three-hour adaptation of the 1987 film that starred Jennifer Grey. This time, actress-singer Abigail Breslin will play the lead role of Baby.

No other cast members were announced, nor did ABC specify an airdate for the film.

"Dirty Dancing" tells the song-and-dance story of a young woman in the early 1960s who vacations with her parents in the Catskill Mountains and falls for the resort's working-class dance instructor, who in the original film was played by Patrick Swayze.

The ABC film will be produced by Lionsgate TV.

'Glee' star Matthew Morrison to leave Broadway show

NEW YORK (AP)—Matthew Morrison is giving himself the hook on Broadway.

The former "Glee" star will take his final bow Jan. 24 in "Finding Neverland," a new musical about the origin of the Peter Pan story. There was no word on who will replace him.

Morrison plays J.M. Barrie, the "Peter Pan" author, in the adaptation from the 2004 whimsical film of the same name about a widow whose four young sons inspired Barrie to write the children's classic.

Morrison had previously starred on Broadway in "Hairspray," ''South Pacific" and "The Light in the Piazza," for which he was nominated for a 2005 Tony Award. He played choir director Will Schuester on "Glee" for six seasons.

Teen's serious relationship draws fire from boy's mom

DEAR ABBY: I'm 13 and in what I think is a serious relationship with "Josh." The problem is, his mom thinks I'm "mentally abusing" him.

I have never done anything to Josh to make her think that. She and I have had our disagreements and have not spoken for periods of time before, but nothing like this has ever happened.

I'm pretty sure I love Josh, and I don't want to lose him because of what his mom thinks of me. What should I do?

PUZZLED IN INDIANA

DEAR PUZZLED: You didn't mention how old Josh is and how he feels about all the attention you're giving him, but I can offer a couple of suggestions. The first is to slow down. Take a step back so Josh can have some breathing room. The second is to try to make a friend rather than an enemy of Josh's mother, who may be worried about a 13-year-old girl who seems fixated on her son.

DEAR ABBY: I remarried when my son, "Kevin," was 5. He's now 20. My husband has always tried to be a good dad to him even though Kevin was challenging at times.

Kevin is now in the military. Before he left, he adopted a dog, "Leisel," that's a year old. Kevin will be deployed overseas for three years and wants us to take her. We have a dog and cat, a big yard and three teenage daughters who want Leisel, but my husband says no. He says it was a mistake to get the dog in the first place, and Kevin needs to learn a lesson and do the hard thing and give her up.

I agree it was a mistake, and I don't really want another dog, but I'm willing to do it for my son. Lots of parents get "stuck" with their kids' pets. They roll their eyes and just do it. Who is right?

WILLING TO DO IT IN WEST VIRGINIA

DEAR WILLING: You are. This is no time to teach your son a lesson. With the international situation heating up as it seems to be, there's no telling where your son could wind up being stationed. Let him go with peace of mind knowing his pet will be well cared for until he returns.

DEAR ABBY: You probably wonder why I think this is a problem, but it is for me. I'm a single male, almost 77, who can easily pass for 50 or 55. The problem is friends, acquaintances and some strangers (in their 40s, 50s and 60s) think that because I look so much younger than my age, I should be able to perform the same physical tasks they do, which I can't. I have the same aches and pains as anyone else my age.

I'm flattered that I look younger, but how do I explain that because I look 50 to 55, doesn't mean I necessarily feel that way. I know, I know. Some people probably wish they had my problem.

YOUNG/OLD IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR YOUNG/OLD: I have news for you. There are plenty of people half your age who also have physical problems that prevent them from performing certain tasks -- including bad backs, bad knees, rotator cuff injuries and more. Because someone looks great doesn't necessarily mean that the person IS 100 percent. If you are asked to do something beyond your ability, be honest about it and say no.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

DEAR ABBY

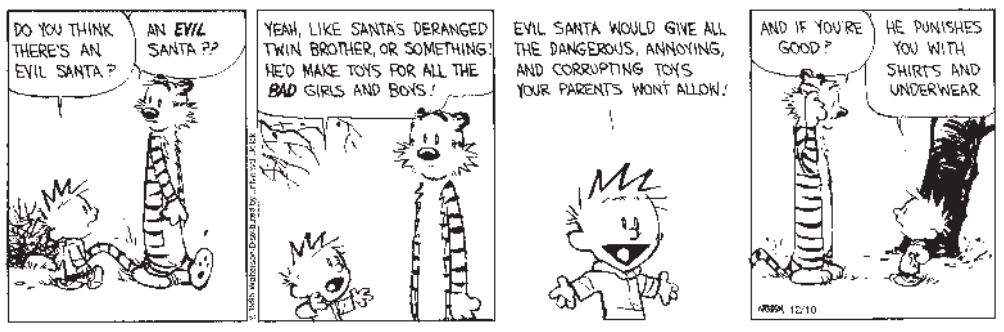
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

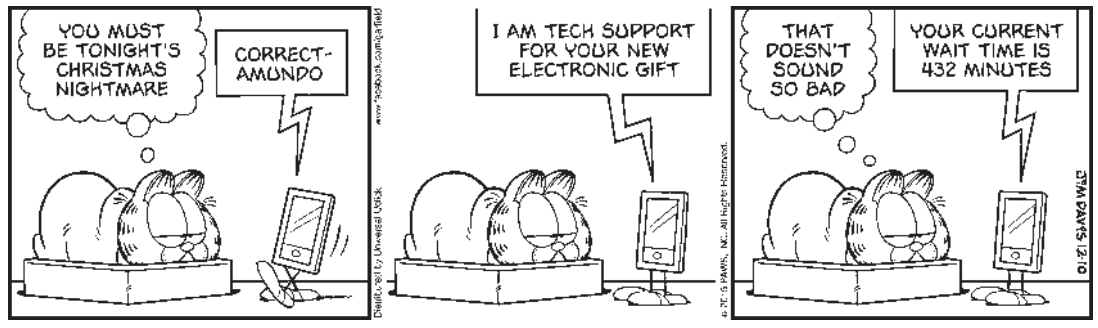
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


DO YOU THINK THERE'S AN EVIL SANTA?
AN EVIL SANTA??
YEAH, LIKE SANTA'S DERANGED TWIN BROTHER, OR SOMETHING! HE'D MAKE TOYS FOR ALL THE BAD GIRLS AND BOYS!
EVIL SANTA WOULD GIVE ALL THE DANGEROUS, ANNOYING, AND CORRUPTING TOYS YOUR PARENTS WON'T ALLOW!
AND IF YOU'RE GOOD?
HE PUNISHES YOU WITH SHIRTS AND UNDERWEAR

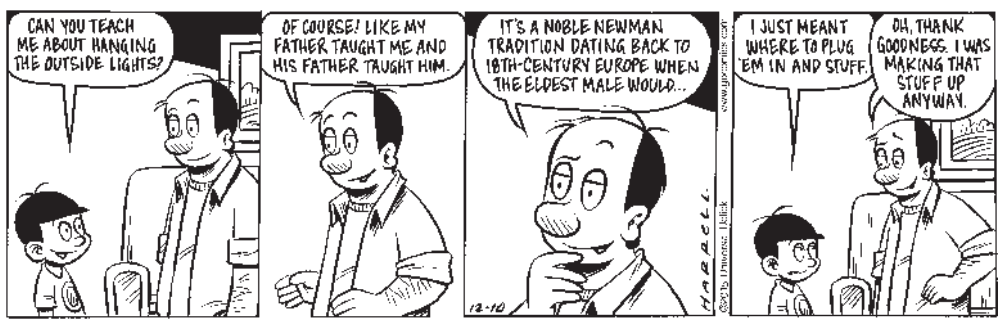
Garfield®

By Jim Davis


YOU MUST BE TONIGHT'S CHRISTMAS NIGHTMARE
CORRECT-AMUNDO
I AM TECH SUPPORT FOR YOUR NEW ELECTRONIC GIFT
THAT DOESN'T SOUND SO BAD
YOUR CURRENT WAIT TIME IS 432 MINUTES

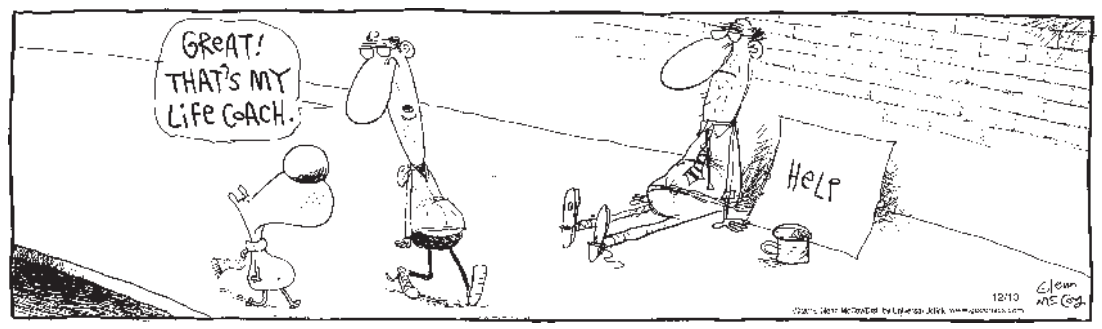
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


CAN YOU TEACH ME ABOUT HANGING THE OUTSIDE LIGHTS?
OF COURSE! LIKE MY FATHER TAUGHT ME AND HIS FATHER TAUGHT HIM.
IT'S A NOBLE NEWMAN TRADITION DATING BACK TO 18TH-CENTURY EUROPE WHEN THE ELDEST MALE WOULD...
I JUST MEANT WHERE TO PLUG 'EM IN AND STUFF.
OH, THANK GOODNESS. I WAS MAKING THAT STUFF UP ANYWAY.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

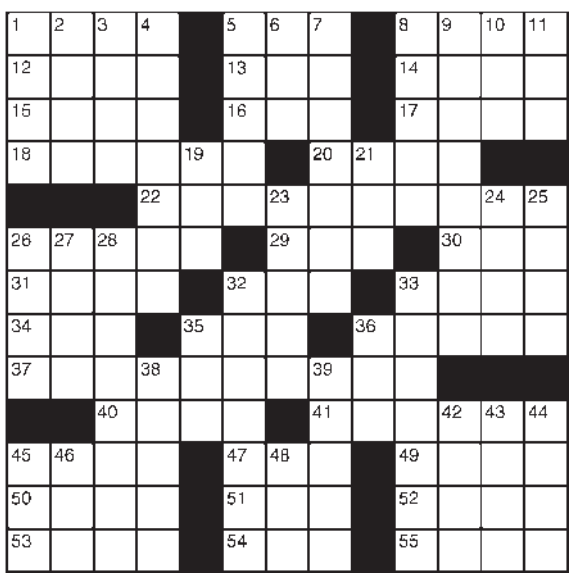
ACROSS
1 Tater
5 — Alamos
8 Slightly open
12 "Les Miserables" author
13 Snowy peak
14 Sushi fish
15 "— and Janis"
16 Busy buzzer
17 Mixed in with
18 Goofball
20 Lawman Wyatt
22 1937 Triple Crown winner
26 Cato or Nero
29 Chafe
30 Iron source
31 "Fine!"
32 Sound investment?
33 Tax pros
34 60 seconds (Abbr.)
35 To and —
36 Well-versed folks?
37 1971 Cat Stevens hit
40 All even
41 Idaho neighbor
45 "It's — real!"
47 Rescue-squad fig.
49 Carrier to Tel Aviv
50 Like fine wine
51 Epcot center?
52 Zilch
53 Pinkish-red
54 Cries of pain
55 Tetley products

DOWN
1 "Pygmalion" writer
2 Untainted
3 Wrinkly fruit
4 Place to make an entrance?
5 Parts partner
6 World Cup cry
7 Go faster
8 Video-game pioneer
9 Double Dutch need
10 Singer DiFranco
11 "Cool, dude!"
19 QB Marino
21 Embassy VIP
23 Strong suit?
24 "I smell —!"
25 Minus
26 Frolic
27 Dust Bowl escapee
28 Everglades sea cows
32 Erte's style
33 Nun's home
35 Fixed cost
36 Slapstick missile
38 Supermodel Crawford
39 Starter bets
42 Skin care gel
43 Kooky Carvey
44 Pub drinks
45 Saloon
46 Self-image
48 Kitten call

Solution time: 25 mins.

		T	O	E			B	B	C			
	F	A	U	X		B	E	L	L	A		
P	O	U	C	H		E	L	A	I	N	E	
S	C	O	P	H	I	E	S	C	H	O	I	C	E
A	L	E		B	A	T	H	S		M	R	X
		S	I	R	S			T	A	U	T	
	F	L	A	T	S		O	P	A	L	S	
B	R	E	W			A	H	A	B			
F	I	E		D	E	L	H	I		M	A	Y
F	A	L	L	I	N	G	I	N	L	O	V	E
	R	E	C	E	D	E		M	U	N	I	S
		E	D	G	E	R		A	G	E	D	
			S	O	D			N	E	T		

Yesterday's answer 12-10



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Raven-Symone, 30; Bobby Flay, 51; Nia Peeples, 54; Kenneth Branagh, 55.

Happy Birthday: Question what you have done in the past and take responsibility so that you can move on. Getting back on track will require discipline and hard work, but that's something you'll be able to accomplish by realigning yourself with people who offer positive support and set good examples. Change is good and will contribute to your success. Your numbers are 9, 16, 20, 27, 31, 36, 44.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Put your energy to work for you. Don't get anxious, get moving. Make decisions that will improve your financial future, and set goals that will encourage you to save for something special. Think things through carefully instead of being impulsive. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Pick and choose what you spend your money on. Someone will try to talk you out of your cash. Don't make donations or loan money to others. Pay more attention to learning and improving your skills and qualifications. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Take action to resolve a problem with someone. It's important to know where you stand if you want to make the best decision possible, especially if it can influence an important partnership, your job or your plans for the future. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Enjoy doing things that make you happy. Spend time with children or someone you have a romantic interest in. A positive change at home could result in more people or pets living under your roof. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Step into the spotlight and take control. Your spontaneity and compassion will help you bring about change. It's likely you will face someone who doesn't agree with you, but your ability to win over the majority will bring positive results. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Take care of personal business and responsibilities, but don't let anyone burden you with situations that don't require your undivided attention. It will be your own fault if you can't say no to someone making unreasonable demands. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Do something that makes you happy. The experience will be revitalizing and will help you project a better image. Try to come up with solutions that you can use to handle a situation you face with a friend, relative or peer. Check out vacation destinations. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Love, passion and making important decisions are favored. Consider making a move, rearranging your furniture or decorating for the holidays. It will lift your spirits and spark your imagination. Don't be afraid to do things differently and stand out from the crowd. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You will face uncertainty and confusion from others. Don't let anyone use emotional blackmail in order to tempt you to do things that aren't good for you or that could separate you from your cash. Be responsible. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Avoid travel and dealing with institutions, if possible. Taking care of your health and setting up an exercise program that will help you stay in shape and look your best is a good place to start. Put your needs first for a change. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): If you want something, go after it. A job that interests you is within reach. Use innovative tactics to attract attention and support from those who can help you achieve your goals. Strive for greater stability and you will gain recognition and respect. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Protect against false accusations and emotional manipulation. Use your intelligence and insight to avoid getting involved in something that has the potential to make you look bad. A moderate approach and tight budget will give you financial wiggle room. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are adventurous, inquisitive and hardworking. You are emotional and charming. *Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	1			6		4		
6					9			
			3					9
		4		5			8	
8			4		7			1
	2			1		6		
9					5			
			8					6
		7		4			5	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/10

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

3	2	5	1	8	6	7	4	9
6	7	9	5	4	3	2	8	1
4	1	8	2	9	7	5	3	6
7	6	4	8	5	1	3	9	2
2	8	1	6	3	9	4	7	5
5	9	3	4	7	2	1	6	8
9	4	2	3	1	8	6	5	7
8	5	6	7	2	4	9	1	3
1	3	7	9	6	5	8	2	4

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/10

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

YEWS **Solution: 7 letters**

G	T	S	C	E	T	I	H	W	W	O	R	G	N	E
N	N	E	A	S	H	R	U	B	O	R	D	E	R	S
I	A	I	T	C	G	G	N	I	R	A	E	H	S	E
H	R	R	K	O	I	F	A	R	M	I	N	G	U	N
C	G	R	I	A	L	F	S	D	E	E	S	A	M	I
T	A	E	N	E	M	E	I	S	E	M	Y	R	A	H
E	R	B	A	F	E	E	R	C	N	U	A	D	T	C
L	F	V	L	S	G	F	R	A	A	L	W	E	R	A
F	E	A	D	L	O	R	C	I	N	P	K	N	A	N
S	T	K	D	L	R	I	E	L	F	T	L	S	N	A
E	W	R	I	E	X	E	L	E	E	D	A	H	S	D
G	I	A	E	E	E	R	E	T	N	I	W	H	H	I
D	G	D	M	R	N	O	T	N	U	A	T	E	O	A
E	S	S	T	I	U	R	F	E	M	A	L	E	R	N
H	A	R	D	Y	G	N	I	R	P	S	M	E	T	S

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Berries, Birds, Borders, Canadian, Catkin, Chinese, Dark, Deer, Farming, Female, Firemaking, Flat, Fletching, Foliage, Fragrant, Fruit, Gardens, Green, Grow, Hardy, Hedge, Leaves, Light, Mexican, Old, Pacific, Paths, Plum, Seeds, Shade, Shearing, Short, Shrub, Soil, Spring, Stem, Sumatran, Taunton, Tolerant, Tree, Twigs, Walkways, White, Winter

Yesterday's Answer: Pictures

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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-must have 5 years experience.

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Koblerville, Saipan MP, 96950
E-mail:hectorsablan@yahoo.com

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(1) Sales Agent (for Chinese Market)
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• Flexible time
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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JNJ CORPORATION
(3) Cook
• 2 years experience
• Flexible time
Send resume to PMB 114
Box 10002, Saipan, MP 96950

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is seeking for:
(1) Tour Guide - $6.55/hour
(1) Travel Agent - $6.55/hour
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Minimum of two years experience
Fluent in Mandarin Language
Tinian
Interested applicants, please send resume to PMB 268A P.O. Box 10002, Saipan MP 96950
For more information, call: 287-8855

LOOKING FOR

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Email or send resume:
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Businesses slam 'excessive' $500 fire re-inspection, $500 permit fees
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The flagrance of war
Focus
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KagHS JROTC does well in drill competition
GCA's January forensic winners
Overdrive
Mustang Boss 302
a thrill to drive, but lacks the extras
Life&Style
Davis, Dujardin win lead honors at SAG awards
Mary Tyler Moore honored for lifetime achievement
Pastimes
Calvin and Hobbes
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Rollers eyeing two trips to PH in 201
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Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 5-day run in both print and online editions, for as low as $30 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$15	$30
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Classified Ads

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Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

CHOW CHEW CHIHUAHUA

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Find today's solution in classified section

Thompson, Warriors improve to 23-0, beat Pacers, 131-123

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Klay Thompson and his teammates spent the first three quarters playing as flawlessly as their unbeaten record.

They spent the last 12 minutes Tuesday trying to protect their perfect quest.

On a night Thompson scored a season-high 39 points and reigning MVP Stephen Curry nearly had a triple-double, the Warriors improved to 23-0 by stopping Indiana's furious fourth-quarter comeback and holding on for a 131-123 victory.

"We've got to handle the end of the game better. We had a double-digit lead. You don't ever want to have to win the game twice or even three times," Curry said. "You want to make things as easy as possible when you have a night like we did for 36 minutes."

The defending NBA champions have made things look pretty easy in what has already been a milestone season.

They've won 27 straight dating to last spring, tying the 2012-13 Heat for the second-longest streak in NBA history. The 1971-72 Lakers hold the record with 33 wins in a row.

Golden State also has won 13 straight road games, breaking a tie with the 1969-70 Knicks for the league's best road start.

Curry, the league's leading scorer, finished with 29 points, 10 assists, seven rebounds and three 3-pointers, tying Rashard Lewis' NBA record of 87 consecutive road games with at least one basket from beyond the arc.

But Thompson made a splash with his incredible first half. He scored 29 points, made 8 of 10 3s and was the key to a 22-0 run that forced Indiana (12-8) to play catch-up the rest of the night.

"It was one of those nights where I got a lot of great looks. Going in I felt great," Thompson said. "I felt like I was due for a game like that."

For the Warriors there were only two big concerns.

Thompson rolled his ankle late in the game and said afterward he expected to be bruised for the next couple of days. Fortunately for Thompson, Golden State doesn't play again till Friday at Boston.

The other: Letting Indiana back into the game.

Golden State led 50-28 in the second quarter, extended the lead to 32 in the third quarter, started the fourth quarter with a 28-point advantage and was still up by 21 with 7:11 left in the game.

But Indiana (12-8) rallied with a 23-8 run to get within six in the final minute before the Warriors closed it out.

Paul George finished with 33 points, eight rebounds and six assists while C.J. Miles added 24 points—not enough to prevent the Pacers from losing their third in a row.

"This team is good. One thing about them, they've got a championship confidence," George said. "Every guy is out there to make plays. They know how to put the ball in the hole. It's not just Stephen, it's not just Klay. All of them had that confidence to make plays and make shots."

Cavaliers 105, Trail Blazers 100

In Cleveland, LeBron James had 33 points and 10 rebounds, and the Cavaliers rallied from an 18-point first-half deficit to get the win.

Kevin Love added 18 points, and a second-half lineup adjustment by coach David Blatt helped Cleveland break a three-game losing streak.

James, who didn't play Saturday in Miami to rest, scored 14 points in the fourth quarter, including a 3-pointer and a three-point play down the stretch. He shot 14 for 24 from the field.

Damian Lillard scored 33 points for Portland, which blew a late lead Monday in Milwaukee and appeared to run out of gas as Cleveland came back in the second half.

Nets 110, Rockets 105

In New York, Brook Lopez scored 24 points, Joe Johnson had 22, and Brooklyn beat Houston to sweep the season series for the first time in 14 years.

Thaddeus Young finished with 20 points and 12 rebounds for the Nets, who have recorded two of their six victories this season against Houston. Bojan Bogdanovic scored 19 points in place of injured rookie Rondae Hollis-Jefferson.

Marcus Thornton scored a season-high 32 points for the Rockets, who fell behind by 18 points and got quiet nights from stars James Harden and Dwight Howard. Corey Brewer had 22 in extended minutes after starting forward Trevor Ariza was lost to a bruised lower back after 4 minutes.

Thunder 125, Grizzlies 88

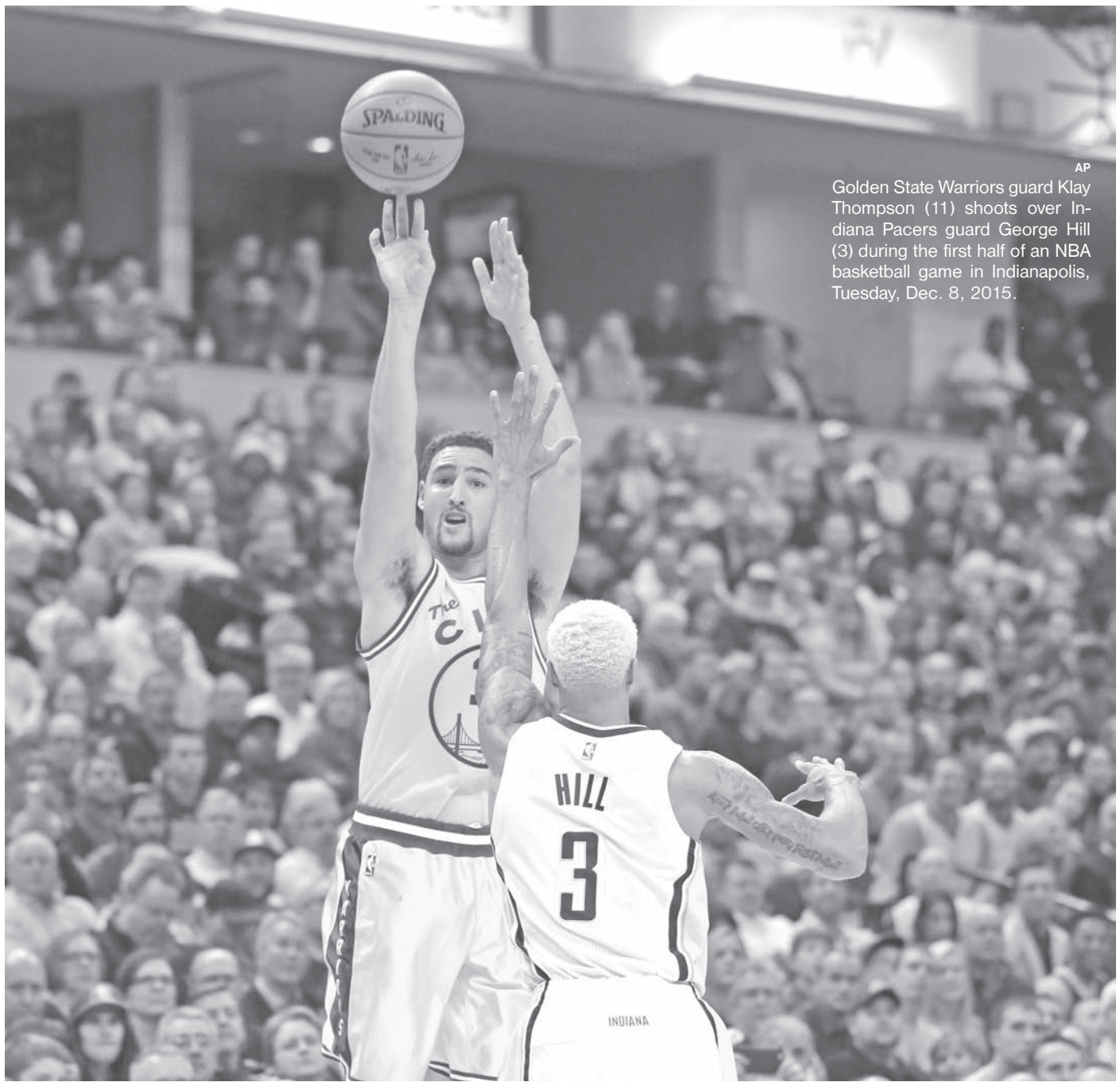
In Memphis, Tenn., Kevin Durant had 32 points and 10 rebounds for Oklahoma City, and Russell Westbrook added 13 points while matching his season high with 16 assists.

The Thunder built the lead to 35 through three quarters and coasted to their second straight win.

Serge Ibaka scored 17 for Oklahoma City, and D.J. Augustin had 13. Dion Waiters finished with 12 points.

Mario Chalmers led Memphis with 19 points, and Ja-Mychal Green and Marc Gasol had 11 apiece. It was the most points given up by Memphis this season.

The Thunder lead was large enough that the starters, including Westbrook and Durant, sat out the fourth quarter.



AP

Golden State Warriors guard Klay Thompson (11) shoots over Indiana Pacers guard George Hill (3) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Indianapolis, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2015.

Kings 114, Jazz 106

In Sacramento, Calif., Kings star DeMarcus Cousins had 23 points, 12 rebounds and six assists, and Rudy Gay also scored 23 points.

The Kings took a 12-point lead after one quarter and never trailed again in ending a three-game losing streak.

Omri Casspi scored 19 points and Rajon Rondo had 17 points and 13 assists for the Kings. It was the 13th time this season that Rondo had 10 or more assists. Sacramento shot 55.8 percent.

Alec Burks and Gordon Hayward had 18 points apiece for Utah, which had beaten the Kings three straight and five of six times.

Magic 85, Nuggets 74

In Denver, Nikola Vucevic had 18 points and 13 rebounds, Evan Fournier hit a big 3-pointer late and Orlando got the win on the road.

Elfrid Payton finished with 18 points as the Magic snapped a five-game skid against the Nuggets.

With the Magic up by two with 2:38 remaining, Fournier knocked down a 3 to give them some breathing room. Orlando has made a 3-pointer in 677 straight games dating to 2007, a streak that was in jeopardy until Fournier's shot. The team finished 1 for 16 from 3-point range.

Reserve Will Barton scored 23 points for the Nuggets, who fell to 0-11 this season when scoring less than 100 points.

In the East, it's an absolute early season standings logjam

MIAMI (AP)—After six weeks of the season, the Eastern Conference looks better than it did a year ago.

Looks messier, too.

Out West, it's easy to see who stands out. Golden State's record-setting 22-0 start has the reigning NBA champions as the league's unquestioned favorites, and San Antonio is the only team that hasn't let the Warriors run away and completely hide in the early season standings.

But in the East, Cleveland's 13-7 mark is good enough for first place right now, Indiana's 12-7 mark is second-best—and Detroit's 12-10 start wouldn't be good enough to get in the playoffs if that field was decided today, after two teams with losing records got into the postseason mix last season.

"I think the players and the teams should take pride in it," said Miami coach Erik Spoelstra, whose team fell from first to third with its loss to Washington on Monday night. "This is what you want as competitors. You want it to be really competitive in your conference. You want your games to have significance and meaning every single night."

That's been the case so far, without question.

The top 10 teams in the East are separated by two games, the top seven separated by only one. To put it in further context, the eight-game gap between No. 1 Cleveland and No. 14 Brooklyn in the East is actually smaller than the nine-game divide between No. 1 Golden State and No. 3 Oklahoma City in the West—probably both a testament to the parity-laden start on one side of the league and the dominance by the Warriors on the other.

"It's not like kind of the past couple seasons in the East where there was three, four teams and then it was a big gap between everybody else," said New York's Carmelo Anthony, whose Knicks are off to a 10-12 start. "Seems like everybody is playing good basketball this season, especially in the East, so we don't want to dig ourselves a hole."

The season isn't even one-quarter complete, so this logjam almost certainly won't last. But it's a sign the East isn't dreadful, either.

"Seems that way," Washington coach Randy Wittman said. "From top to bottom, it's a lot more competitive than it has been."

Well, maybe not the actual bottom.

Philadelphia fell to 1-21 with its blowout home loss to San Antonio on Monday night, the 31st defeat in the last 32 games for the 76ers going back to last season. The Sixers are on pace to finish with the worst record in NBA history and seem well on their way to seeing their win total drop for the fifth straight season—so it's a safe bet that even the most ardent Philly fan isn't exactly counting on a playoff berth happening next spring.

Everyone else, there's still reason for optimism.

"I think it's a lot better personally," Charlotte coach Steve Clifford said. "Of the three years I've been here, it's been by far better. And I think the discrepancy between the East and the West has narrowed a lot too. There's a lot of good teams in te East now. You're going to have to play well any night to win.

Yankees get Starlin Castro from Cubs for Adam Warren

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—In another move to get younger and balance their batting order, the New York Yankees acquired infielder Starlin Castro from the Chicago Cubs on Tuesday night for pitcher Adam Warren and a player to be named.

The 25-year-old Castro hit .265 with 11 homers and 69 RBIs last season, when he batted .281 against left-handers. A right-handed hitter, he has spent most of his career at shortstop, but moved to second base in mid-August to make room for rookie Addison Russell.

"He really looked like a different player over at second," Cashman said.

In the past year, the Yankees also acquired Didi Gregorius (25), Dustin Ackley (26) and Aaron Hicks (26). Looking for their first World Series title since 2009, the Yankees missed the playoffs for two straight years, then lost to Houston in this year's wild-card game.

"It hasn't and isn't part of our DNA to accept that full-blown commitment to a rebuild," Cashman said. "I think the ownership's comfort level is walking that tightrope rather than tear down and live to fight another day. The public stated goal is to get younger and compete for the championship every year."

AP
In this Aug. 21, 2010, file photo, Chicago Cubs shortstop Starlin Castro fields an infield single by Atlanta Braves' Jason Heyward during the third inning of a baseball game in Chicago.

Earlier in the day, the Cubs agreed to a $56 million, four-year contract with free-agent infielder Ben Zobrist, who figures to take over at second. New York had been discussing a trade for Castro since last summer.

Castro, who lives near the Yankees' spring training complex in Tampa, Florida, is guaranteed $38 million over the remainder of his contract, which is guaranteed through 2019 and includes a club option for 2020.

He hit .300 as a rookie in 2010 and led the NL with 207 hits the following year. But he batted just .265 during the last three seasons as the Cubs shed veterans and restocked.

"All of a sudden you're hitting three-hole. He probably put a lot of pressure on himself and got out of his comfort zone a little bit," said Yankees special assistant Jim Hendry, the Cubs' former general manager.

The 28-year-old Warren went 7-7 with a 3.29 ERA last season in 17 starts and 26 relief appearances. He is eligible for salary arbitration for the first time and can become a free agent after the 2018 World Series.

"He was a tremendous person, great guy in the clubhouse," Cashman said. "The evaluation comes down to the 130 games or more from the everyday position player."

The player to be named is thought to be shortstop Brendan Ryan.

With the deal, the Yankees have seven starting pitching options: Masahiro Tanaka, Luis Severino, CC Sabathia, Michael Pineda, Nathan Eovaldi, Ivan Nova and Bryan Mitchell.

New York has discussed a trade with Miami for Jose Fernandez, but the Yankees are reluctant to give up Severino or their other top prospects, Greg Bird and Aaron Judge.

"Getting younger, cheap—if it checks off a lot of the boxes, you can assume that we checked in on it," Cashman said. "If it's old and expensive, then more likely we didn't check in on that."

New York wasn't interested in top-level free agent pitchers such as Zack Greinke, partly because of the luxury tax.

"Whatever these contracts are going off the board at, the $200 million-level or whatever it is, add 50 percent markup on that to us," Cashman said.

Cashman also said the Yankees never tried to sign Zobrist.

"With our stated goal and his age and the four years, that would fly against what we're trying to accomplish," he said. "We're hopefully doing what we say and saying what we mean, meaning what we say—whatever."

Torre: MLB hopes for new rule to protect middle infielders

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Major League Baseball hopes to push ahead with a rules change to better protect middle infielders from getting hurt by baserunners trying to prevent double-play turns at second base.

Joe Torre, MLB's chief baseball officer, said Tuesday at the winter meetings that MLB will work to draft the rule in conjunction with the players' association.

"I'm not saying it's not going to be in place by this season," he said. "It depends on if we can find a common ground."

Ahead of the 2014 season, MLB banned most home-plate collisions. Injuries at second base gained renewed focus after a hard slide by the Los Angeles Dodgers' Chase Utley broke the leg of New York Mets shortstop Ruben Tejada during the NL Division Series. Torre later suspended Utley for two games, ruling the slide illegal, discipline the players' association has appealed.

At the Arizona Fall League, players have been told for two years to slide directly toward the base.

"There's a way, I believe, you can do it without going out of your way to target the fielder," Torre said. "Doesn't mean we're not going to have collisions or guys landing on their rear ends in second base, but you know, I think we could try or I'd like to see us try to keep guys on the field."

Torre said it was unlikely there will be a change on the video review regulation that has caused baserunners to be called out for losing contact with a base while the fielder applies a tag for an extended period.

"When a camera shows you that the glove is on the guy's leg and he's not on the bag, how can you say he's safe?" Torre said.

"Jimmy Leyland, he's been trying to put wording together to try to eliminate that type of hold-on thing," Torre added, referring to the former Detroit manager. "But it's really hard for me to say it's OK to be safe if you're not on the bag and the glove is tagging."

Echoing what Commissioner Rob Manfred said at last month's owners' meeting, Torre said recommendations have been made to teams and owners about increased protective netting to guard fans from injuries from foul balls and bats that enter the stands.

He also said no change is likely next year to the rule expanding active rosters from 25 to 40 each Sept. 1. Some have complained each team should have an equal number of players for each game, and some advocate each team being able to use a subset of their 40-man roster each night in September.

Torre said that discussion probably will take place in collective bargaining for a labor contract to replace the current deal, which expires next Dec. 1.

"When you have, say, 28 guys and somebody else has 35, it's not a level playing field," Torre said. "We have to make sure we're able to cross the T's and dot the I's."

D-Backs adding Miller behind Greinke; Cubs nab Zobrist

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—In another dramatic move to return to the playoffs for the first time since 2011, the Arizona Diamondbacks reached an agreement Tuesday to acquire All-Star right-hander Shelby Miller from the Atlanta Braves for overall No. 1 draft pick Dansby Swanson and two other prospects.

Arizona, which finalized a $206.5 million, six-year contract with major league ERA leader Zack Greinke earlier in the day, also would send outfielder Ender Inciarte and pitching prospect Aaron Blair to the Braves. The Diamondbacks would acquire minor league left-hander Gabe Speier, a person familiar with the deal told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because the trade was pending approval of medical records.

"If by some chance we get lucky and we get an opportunity to make a nice deal that helps us right now, then you take the opportunity and you take the chance to do it," Diamondbacks general manager Dave Stewart said before the trade became known.

Greinke is set to anchor a new-look rotation that also could include Patrick Corbin, Rubby De La Rosa and Robbie Ray.

"We're counting on his mentorship with our other pitchers and being a part of helping their growth," Stewart said.

AP
This is a 2015 file photo showing Zack Greinke of the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball team.

The Cubs also made some major moves, agreeing to a $56 million, four-year contract with infielder Ben Zobrist and trading second baseman Starlin Castro to the New York Yankees for right-hander Adam Warren and a player to be named, likely infielder Brendan Ryan.

Zobrist played his first nine seasons with Tampa Bay when current Cubs manager Joe Maddon ran the Rays.

"He's all about winning. That's what he's about," Maddon said.

Chicago also finalized a $32 million, two-year contract with 37-year-old right-hander John Lackey, who slots in as the Cubs' third starter behind Jake Arrieta and Jon Lester.

In the past year, the Yankees also acquired Didi Gregorius (25), Dustin Ackley (26) and Aaron Hicks (26). Looking for their first World Series title since 2009, the Yankees missed the playoffs for two straight years, then lost to Houston in this year's wild-card game.

"It hasn't and isn't part of our DNA to accept that full-blown commitment to a rebuild," Yankees general manager Brian Cashman said. "I think the ownership's comfort level is walking that tightrope rather than tear down and live to fight another day. The public stated goal is to get younger and compete for the championship every year."

St. Louis acquired infielder Jedd Gyorko from San Diego for outfielder Jon Jay. The Padres will pay St. Louis $7.5 million to cover part of the $33 million remaining on Gyorko's contract.

The 27-year-old Gyorko hit .247 with 16 homers and 57 RBIs this year, spending time at second base, shortstop and first base. He has a .236 average in three big league seasons with 49 homers and 171 RBIs.

Also:

- Atlanta agreed to a $5.3 million, two-year contract with catcher Tyler Flowers, a person familiar with that deal said, also speaking on condition of anonymity because there had not been an announcement.
- Detroit finalized an $11 million, two-year contract with reliever Mark Lowe.
- Colorado agreed to two-year deals with a pair of relievers, guaranteeing Jason Motte $10 million and Chad Qualls $6 million.
- Seattle acquired right-hander Evan Scribner from Oakland for minor league right-hander Trey Cochran-Gill.

Girls softball tournament to use draft

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The planned inaugural girls softball tournament will be using a draft format similar to the ones used in professional sports leagues in the United States to evenly spread out the players.

This was what Northern Marianas Sports Association vice president Kurt Barnes, softball player Pina Magofna, and CNMI Sports Hall of Famer Tony Satur had agreed on during a recent meeting at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

JON PEREZ
Softball players from the Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization are being targeted by a fast-pitch league that is being formed in the hopes of reviving interest in the sport.

They are trying to form a chore group with the goal of reviving fast-pitch softball especially at the grassroots level.

Satur said a players draft would make sure that no team would dominate the games and to avoid lopsided results.

"It is best to all the players and the teams that will be formed to evenly distribute those who already know how to play fast-pitch softball," said Satur, who was inducted to the CNMI Sports Hall of Fame for his exploits in playing softball.

"The players will also have seedings. In that way, there won't be only two teams that will dominate every game," added Magofna, who also plays the sport.

Barnes also suggested that participating teams would first draw lots to know which will pick first and so forth.

"For example, if there are five teams they will pick 1-2-3-4-5 in that order and it will go in reverse where the last team to pick will get a chance to choose again. So they will get two players," said Barnes.

It would also be the same for the next league or tournament where the last team in the standings, after the season, will be the first to choose from a players' pool.

Satur also suggested that a one- or two-week clinic should also be held to all interested youth players.

"I am willing to facilitate the clinic. It is best to all interested players to undergo a clinic whether they already know how to play or if they are a beginner," added Satur.

Barnes said they would invite more people to attend another meeting in January. "We want to also toss the idea to them. It is better to get more people involved."

NMSA is hoping softball together with table tennis and weightlifting be revived. Table tennis and weightlifting has been a source of medals for the CNMI in the Micronesian Games.

Murig: 50-70 not possible in 2016

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan Little League Board Inc. president A.J. Palacios Murig said that adding a 50-70 division in the 2016 season is not possible due to time constraints and the condition of the Miguel Basa "Tan Ge" Pangelinan softball field.

The Tan Ge field was severely damaged after Typhoon Soudelor passed by Saipan last Aug. 2. The roof of the bleachers, press box, the pitcher's bullpen, the dugout near the first base, and the fence around the field need repairs.

The possibility of adding the 50-70 division was initially discussed by the SLLBI but Murig said they are facing a tight schedule for the 2016 season, especially since there's no assurance that the Francisco M. "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field could hold night games for the Big League.

"The board has tackled the 50-70 division issue [after] I have been asked by some of the members of our SLLBI family. I couldn't give a definite answer [yet] because I [still] have to meet with the board to discuss its fate," said Murig in an email sent to the media.

Murig added that the condition of the Tan Ge softball field is one of the reasons of their decision to scrap the 50-70 this season. The 50-70, if it pushes through, will share the use of the Tan Ge field with the Majors division.

He said time is also not on their side as they face the possibility of a delayed opening. "[It is] because of the time constraints that we have at hand. The delay on the opening of the season is [really] possible."

"The fence is a major issue that I take seriously. Our youngest division plays there, during games you see other players from other teams as well as fans and family members along the dug out watching the games," added Murig.

JON PEREZ
The steel fence near the first base dugout and a portion of the pitcher's bullpen were among the damage sustained by the Miguel Basa "Tan Ge" Pangelinan softball field. The Tan Ge field is home to the Majors division of the Saipan Little League.

"I rather see a delay in the start of the majors division than having them play with the possibility of them and the spectators getting injured from the ball in play. We may have to put up temporary fencing," he said.

"But if that should happen, I want to be sure it is high enough to keep balls in the field and strong enough to stand the force of players running into the fence to field a ball. [The kids'] safety is our top priority."

The 50-70 or the intermediate division is for players 11 to 13 years old as they slowly transition from the Major (Little League 9-12 years) to the Juniors, the 13-14 age group. Little League headquarters introduced it in 2013.

CNMI district administrator James Ada has asked all three Little League baseball programs in the Commonwealth—Saipan, Tinian, and Rota—to consider adding the 50-70 division for next year.

Nakamura leads opener of RGA's yearend Ace

Harry Nakamura shot the lowest net score to grab the opening lead of the Ace of Aces yearend tournament of the Refaluwasch Golf Association held last Sunday at the Marianas Country Club.

Nakamura

Nakamura, who works at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort, shot a net score of 70 to become one of the favorites to win the title.

Joe Lizama and Manny Mangarero are in second and third places, respectively, entering the final day on Dec. 13, on Sunday also at MCC.

Nakamura was part of the four-member CNMI men's golf team that competed in the XV Pacific Games in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea early this year.

Joseph Camacho, Franco Nakamura, and Louie Tilipao are the other members of the team.

Nakamura is also in contention for the Marianas Golf Association's own Ace of Aces tournament as he is among the 12 players that vied for the yearend event after winning the January monthly title.

The year 2015 has also become quite generous for Nakamura as he and Louie Tilipao won the low gross category in this year's 37th anniversary golf tournament of the Marianas Resort & Spa.

He and Pina Magofna also ruled the inaugural Laolao Bay Golf & Resort employees' golf tournament, a two-person scramble best ball format last month.

RGA's final day of the yearend tournament is set on Sunday with an 11am show time and 12pm tee off. ***(Jon Perez)***

DIZON

From Page 28

through steep that being familiar with the racecourse also helped him in navigating his way through Saipan's steep hills and sharp curves.

"We usually ride the same course three times a week. We head up Saipan's north side every Tuesday and Thursday night, and we ride around the island every Saturdays," added Dizon.

Fifteen other Saipan riders opted to join Dizon in the mountain bike category and avoided the road bike division, which is loaded with a strong field of experienced pros and international cyclists.

Rhenmer Remillosa of Tinian and Donald Stover, who flew all the way from Denver, were the other cyclists that also competed in the MTB.

Remillosa and Will Schroeder were the lone riders in the U17 and 18-29 divisions, clocking 4:36:05 and 5:38:58, respectively.

Dennis Bautista (4:22:23), Mark Isip (4:25:38), and Ferdinand Ramos (4:28:01) finished 1-2-3 in the 40-49 age group, while Noel Altamirano, who placed third overall, led the 50-59 year olds with a time of 4:21:56.

Romy Guevarra (4:47:41), Stover (4:52:07), Floro Derexes (5:01:23), Ruben Leynes (5:05:12), and Darryl Atwood (6:01:41) completed the cast also in the 50-59 division.

PIC

From Page 28

Babauta, along with Raymark Castro, came to play at the resumption of the match, providing some hustle for PIC and disrupting GMI Market's offensive sets in the final stage of the third canto. A triple from Jesse Santos, who was in and out of the game, in the last 10 seconds of that period ended GMI Market's silence and moved the team within 13, 49-62, with a full quarter to go.

However, that was the closest that GMI Market would get, as another 7-0 run early in the final canto helped PIC pull away. PIC pounced on GMI Market's careless passes to get away with easy baskets and when the former was not making uncontested layups, its top gunner Jack Aranda was peppering their opponents with one triple after another.

Aranda drilled six triples in the fourth quarter alone, capping his hot shooting in the final canto with back-to-back treys. His sixth basket from downtown was PIC's last field goal, while Jeff Deleon Guerrero made the final shot—a layup—in the match before rain stopped the game anew with 1:02 left on the clock. With PIC ahead by a whopping 38 points, GMI Market threw in the towel, informing game officials that they will no longer play the remaining minute of the match.

Aranda led PIC's rout of GMI Market, firing 30 points. Jack Quitugua added 16, while Darwin Barbo still finished in twin digits with his 12 markers despite staying on the bench majority of the fourth quarter. Barbo, James Abuy, and Mike Espinosa did not need to report back to the game early in the fourth, as Quitugua, Aranda, Castro, Emerson Feria, and Babauta worked well together in PIC's breakaway.

While PIC found the right combination on the floor, it was a different story for GMI Market. There was too much reshuffling of personnel that shooters like Jesse and Jon Santos could not get into their zone. Mike Cabanas, who had a solid first half performance after scoring 12 points, saw limited minutes in the second half. Cabanas knocked in two of GMI Market's first two field goals in the first period, which ended with his team behind by only a deuce, 10-12. He then tallied 10 markers in the second canto, as GMI Market kept PIC within striking distance at halftime, 31-37.

Cabanas did not start in the third quarter and GMI Market continued to switch players, while PIC stuck with three of its starters and reinforced them with Babauta and Castro to gain momentum in the closing minutes of the third.

Meanwhile, after eliminating GMI Market, PIC will have a tougher foe in top-ranked GMJ/IKKI, which got an automatic semis berth after ruling the round-robin regular season with its 6-1 record.

Only one Final Four slot is left in the west division with No. 2 seed Blue Haus battling last-ranked Armatech for the final semis ticket this week. The winner of the Blue Haus-Armatech tiff will challenge Cholos 8th Division in the semifinals.

PIC 99 – Aranda 30, Quitugua 16, Barbo 12, Rabasto 9, Feria 8, Abuy 7, Castro 4, Galloway 4, Babauta 3, Espinosa 2.

GMI Market 61 – Je. Santos 16, Cabanas 14, Jon Santos 10, John Santos 6, Deleon Guerrero 4, Palino 3, Hockett 2, Babauta 2, Flores 2, Doseo 2.

Scoring by quarters: 12-10, 37-21, 62-49, 99-61. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	13	9	.591	—
Boston	12	9	.571	½
New York	10	12	.455	3
Brooklyn	6	15	.286	6½
Philadelphia	1	21	.045	12
Southeast Division				
Miami	12	7	.632	—
Charlotte	12	8	.600	½
Atlanta	13	9	.591	½
Orlando	12	9	.571	1
Washington	9	10	.474	3
Central Division				
Cleveland	14	7	.667	—
Chicago	11	7	.611	1½
Indiana	12	8	.600	1½
Detroit	12	10	.545	2½
Milwaukee	9	13	.409	5½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	18	4	.818	—
Dallas	13	9	.591	5
Memphis	12	10	.545	6
Houston	10	12	.455	8
New Orleans	5	16	.238	12½
Northwest Division				
Oklahoma City	13	8	.619	—
Utah	9	10	.474	3
Minnesota	8	12	.400	4½
Portland	9	14	.391	5
Denver	8	14	.364	5½
Pacific Division				
Golden State	23	0	1.000	—
L.A. Clippers	12	9	.571	10
Phoenix	9	13	.409	13½
Sacramento	8	15	.348	15
L.A. Lakers	3	18	.143	19

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NMIFA Youth Fall League U18 Playoffs

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

NMIFA general secretary Ross Zapanta, second left, presents the championship trophy to Tan Holdings FC, which beat MP United, 1-0, in a playoff game in the U18 division of the 2015 NMIFA Youth Fall League last Saturday at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.

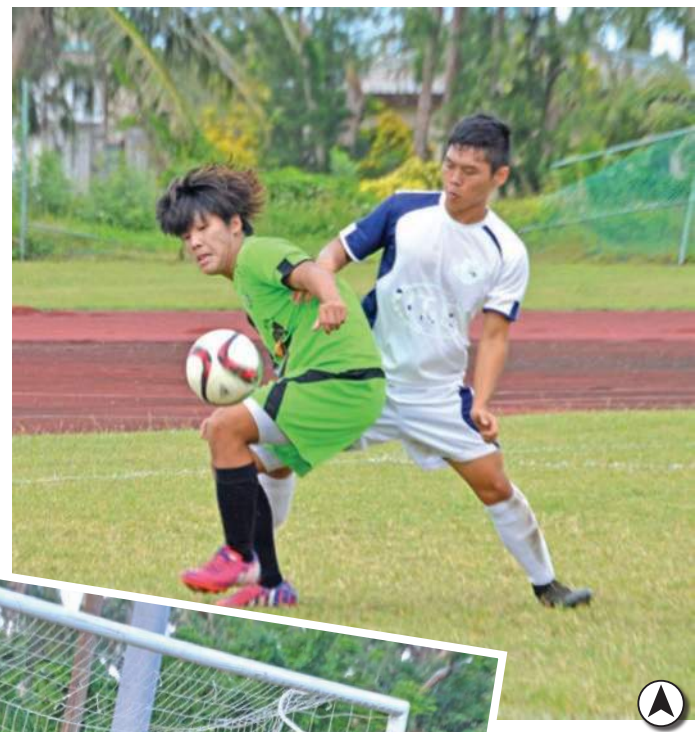
Tan Holdings and MP United players show sportsmanship after their playoff match for the boys U18 title.

MP United goalie Christopher Aninzo, center, rams into teammate Alex Park after stepping up on defense and preventing Hobin Lee from kicking the ball.

Junsik Kim, right, tries to break free from the defense of MP United's Bada Lee.

Tan Holdings' Joel Fruit, center, tries to save the ball from going out of the sideline, while siblings Clayton, left, and Kennedy Izuka of MP United stay close on him.

MP United's Kyle Chung, right, hollers after missing a shot against the team defense of Tan Holdings' Alan Hinson, left, and goalie Josh Galarion.



Tan Holdings' Cosmos Kim, left, uses his body to protect the ball against MP United's Kennedy Izuka.

Tan Holdings' Yoshi Mafnas, center, dribbles away from the defense of MP United's Jason Kim, left, and John Diego Masga.

Tan Holdings' Sean Perez receives a pass from his teammates, while MP United's Bada Lee keeps up with him.

Thompson, Warriors improve to 23-0, beat Pacers, 131-123

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Sports

Girls softball tournament to use draft

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Carol Lee stretches for a return during her singles match against Colin Ramsey during the Week 1 of the 7th Tan Holdings Tennis Classic at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan. She is now in Australia and will play in the finals of the consolation draw.

Lee marches into finals

CNMI junior player Carol Lee continued to fight off injury as she advanced to the finals of the consolation draw of the 2015 14/U Australian Championships.

Lee notched two more victories on the west bracket of the singles event to set up a finals showdown against Megan Smith of Queensland. The 13-year-old defeated New South Wales' Bojana Marinkov in the quarterfinals, 6-1, 6-0, last Tuesday at the Melbourne Park, and then swept South Australia's Tiana Glazbrook, 6-0, 6-3, yesterday to march into the finals against the sixth-ranked Smith.

Lee's wins against Marinkov and Glazbrook were her second and third and came a few days after she nearly pulled out of the tournament due to a knee injury. The Pacific's highest-ranked player (Junior ITF) suffered a knee strain in the third set of her opening round match in the main draw against the No. 2 Madison Bishop of South Australia last Saturday.

"My left upper knee got hurt. I had a long rally and may have outstretched my muscles. My knee cramped at first and I tried to let go by shaking my leg. But it got worse and after that I couldn't really walk and balance well," said Lee in a message sent to *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

Lee was serving and leading at 5-3 in the deciding set when she was forced to withdraw. She lost the first set, 4-6, but extended the match with a 6-4 victory in the second.

With Lee giving up the win, Bishop made it all the way to the semifinals before bowing to Annerly Poulos, 3-6, 6-3, 5-7. Lee, on the other hand, dropped to the main consolation draw and was up on her feet again, dominating Western Australia's Hayley O'Donnell, 6-1, 6-1, and South's Leonora Radocaj, 6-3, 6-1, to move into the quarterfinals and then collected two more wins to get a finals berth.

"It (knee) still hurts, but I am trying not to think about it. I felt sad when I failed to continue my game in the main draw. The girls in that group are very good players and I know I have a chance against them and I can at least make it to the semifinals," Lee said.

Meanwhile, Lee also played in the doubles event with Tahiti's Naia Guitton, but the Pacific GSDF Touring Team members bowed to the fourth-ranked pair of Bishop and Kristina Lane, 4-6, 4-6.

Lee's fellow CNMI player, Tania Tan, competed in the same event and partnered with New South Wales' Tharubphet Homkrun. Tan and Homkrun won the opening set, 3-6, but failed to take the win as NWS' Kayla Greco and South Australia's Casey Tay prevailed in the second, 6-3, and the super tiebreak third set, 10-5.

In the boys division, the CNMI's Robbie Schorr and Tahiti's Jeremy Guines fell to Victoria's Daniel Paveska and Queensland's William Timoney, 4-6, 3-6, while Ken Song and Victoria's Jake Young bowed to NWS' Ashley Lauweriks and Marko Lukic, 3-6, 3-6. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

PIC eliminates GMI Market

Pacific Islands Club pounded GMI Market, 99-61, to make it to the semifinals in the west division of the 2015 San Antonio Community Action Network Basketball League last Monday at the San Antonio court.

PIC used a lull in the closing minutes of the third period to break GMI Market's back, while the latter played erratic basketball in the fourth, allowing the former to turn a close match to a lopsided win.

GMI Market was just down by single digits, 46-55, when the match was halted by rain at the 1:41 mark of the third quarter. The game resumed about 10 minutes later and PIC went on to score 7 unanswered points to build a promising 62-46 advantage. Rey Babauta and Jake Quitugua had one field goal apiece in that short rally, while Jack Aranda knocked in a triple.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Pacific Islands Club's Sean Rabasto pulls up for a running shot during the third quarter of their playoff game against GMI Market in the San Antonio caging last Monday at the San Antonio court.

Dizon rules MTB division of 'Hell'

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Nap Dizon bested 17 other riders to rule the MTB division of last Saturday's Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle race that started and ended just across the Mariana Seaside Circuit near the Mariana Resort & Spa in Marpi.

Dizon, who has been working as a sales representative for Transamerica Corp. for 10 years, circled around the island in 3:44:04 to become the overall winner and the 30-39 age division champion in the male category.

He kept a 6.60 miles per hour pace to finish 19:09 ahead of the 4:03:13 of closest pursuer Charlie Sendin, who was also the runner-up to Dizon in the same age group. J.C. Libut finished third (4:33:41).

Edwin Morales (4:38:54), Ernie Henzon (5:05:45), and Yogesh Singh (6:04:55) were the other riders in the 30-39 division.

"I also biked when I was still in the Philippines but it is more of a hobby and here on Saipan more of my exercise. I also became friends with some veterans who are serious cyclists back in the Philippines," said Dizon, who has been cycling for more than five years, in a phone interview.

He added that course familiarity also helped him navigate his way

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Saipan's Nap Dizon negotiates Airport Road going uphill to San Vicente in last Saturday's Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle race that started and ended at the road across Mariana Resort & Spa in Marpi.